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Printed for the use of the Foreign Office. March 1897.

CONFIDENTIAL.

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PART 7.

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FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE

RESPECTING THE

AFFAIRS OF TUNIS.

1895.

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Further Correspondence respecting the Affairs of Tunis.

PART 7.

No. 1.

Consul-General Haggard to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 11.)

(No. 13.)

My Lord,

Tunis, February 4, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that I was this morning received in audience by the Bey on my entering on my functions as Her Majesty's Consul-General.

I was attended by Mr. Profeit, the British Vice-Consul, and the French Minister Resident, in his capacity of Foreign Minister, accompanied me in his carriage, escorted by a squadron of cavalry, and presented me to His Highness, who welcomed me very cordially. After inquiring warmly after the health of Her Majesty the Queen, he expressed his satisfaction that a Diplomatic officer of the rank of Minister should have been appointed here as Her Majesty's Consul-General. I may mention that this had been particularly explained to the Bey by the French Resident, who evidently takes it as a compliment to France also that such an appointment should have been made.

After my replying in what were, I trust, suitable terms, the interview ended with a warm reiteration on the part of His Highness of the cordial feelings entertained by him towards the Queen and her Empire.

I have, &c.

(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 2.

Mr. Haggard to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 4.)

(No. 3. Secret.)

My Lord,

Tunis, February 6, 1895.

YOUR Lordship is aware that since the French occupation of Tunis their policy has been chiefly directed towards reducing foreign trade, foreign influence, and, if possible, foreign population within the Regency.

The chief objects of the measures, direct and indirect, in which, with that view, they have been incessantly occupied, have been the Italian and Maltese colonies, especially the former.

These settlements are composed generally of thrifty and hard-working individuals, and are very numerous, the Italian being estimated at numbering over 40,000, and the Maltese at about 18,000, throughout the Regency, while the French, with the exception of the army of occupation, only number about 8,000, notwithstanding all the efforts made during the last thirteen years to foster the French colony, often at the expense of the Italians and other foreigners.

Thus, almost every post of patronage under the Bey's Government, even to the "débits de tabac," is now filled by French subjects, the former occupants of foreign origin having been ousted to make way for them.

I hear on good authority that M. Millet, the recently arrived French Resident, has come here with the fixed intention of carrying on this policy to the utmost extremity. He specially intends, if possible, to crush all Italian prosperity, and the inclosed paragraph from the "Dépêche Tunisienne,"* which is the mouthpiece of the views of the Residency, may be looked upon as epitomizing this determination. In the dearth of French colonization, however, and in view of the fact that this, notwithstanding all the efforts to attract it, is steadily diminishing year by year, what is intended to take its place is not so clear, and he may well find that, if he succeeded in destroying foreign industry in the Regency, he may, as was proved in the historical instance of the expulsion of the Moors from Spain, be killing the goose that lays the golden egg.

On the other hand, it must be considered that the Italian Government are using every effort to undermine French, and assert and maintain their own influence here. This they do in every possible way. They spend yearly large sums of money in subventions to schools, hospitals, Chamber of Commerce, &c., and even in guaranteeing the interest on the capital of a railway; it is therefore not surprising that a newly-arrived French Resident, or even the French Government, should view with alarm so powerful a hostile element, and determine to use every means in their power to crush it.

It is generally understood that advantage will be taken of the lapse of the Italian Treaty next year to alter all the fiscal relations of Italy with the Regency; and I have the honour to inclose to your Lordship herewith an extract from the "Dépêche Tunisienne,"* hinting at this in an article in which it publishes and comments on the yearly Report of the Italian Chamber of Commerce.

The Italians say that in that case they will claim the resumption of the Capitulations on the ground that these were only given up temporarily and provisionally, and can be renewed again by the Italian Government; it is hardly likely that France will consent to this view of the matter, so that, should it really be put forward and persisted in by the Italian Government, the result may well affect the friendly relations between the two countries.

It is supposed that, on the lapse of the Italian Treaty, France may wish to get rid of our Treaty with Tunis, and, if this intention exist, it is not too much to expect that if it be carried into effect our trade with Tunis, which is beginning to revive from the shock given by the declaration of the Protectorate, will shortly be in the condition to which it has been reduced in Algeria, that is to say, that another market for our produce will be practically destroyed.

Our Treaty is happily in perpetuity; but I notice that a French Deputy, M. Doumer, proposes, after the vote on the Budget has been taken, "to put a question to the French Minister for Foreign Affairs on the subject of the breaking and revision of the Treaties of the Regency with Italy and England," thus coupling those two countries as if their Treaties were in the same category.

I have ventured even thus early to call your Lordship's attention to those matters in view of the importance that they may possibly ere long assume.

I have, &c.

(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

P.S. February 12, 1895.—Just as I was closing the above, I received Sir T. Sander-son's despatch No. 1 to Mr. Profeit of the 1st February, inclosing an extract from a despatch from Her Majesty's Minister in Stockholm (No. 2 of the 9th January), with reference to the recently arrived French Resident.

The views therein expressed would seem forcibly to bear out those attributed to M. Millet here, to which I have had the honour of alluding in the above despatch.

W. H. D. H.

No. 3.

Mr. Haggard to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 4.)

(No. 4.)

My Lord,

Tunis, February 8, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that M. Millet, the French Resident, is about to undertake a tour into the interior and to the south of the Regency.

* Not printed.

M. Millet is active and intelligent, and is anxious to make himself personally acquainted with the central and outlying districts of the Regency with a view to their development agriculturally, commercially, and politically.

He will be accompanied by a staff composed of the Director of Agriculture, the Director-General of Public Works, the Naval and Military Attachés, one of the Secretaries of Legation, and last, but not least, the Director of the Havas Agency.

I have fortunately, since my arrival, succeeded in establishing very friendly relations with M. Millet, and he has most kindly asked me to join his party.

As this is an opportunity which will probably not occur again of seeing, under the most favourable circumstances, a part of the country which may be of interest to Her Majesty's Government, I have considered it wise to accept the invitation, especially as I have realized that, with my ignorance of Arabic, and in view of the impossibility of procuring a reliable interpreter, it would be very difficult for me to take alone with any very useful result such a journey as that of Mr. Drummond-Hay in 1892, described by him in his Report of the 9th March, 1893.

I have the honour to inclose herewith the copy of our itinerary which the French Residency have kindly given me, as also a rough tracing of the map of the route to be taken,* from which your Lordship will see that the proposed trip would go through practically the whole of the interior of Tunis, and will skirt near the Tripolitan boundary.

Your Lordship will also observe that the objective, both in the case of Mr. Drummond-Hay's journey and that of the Resident, is the Tschott-el-Djerid, the salt desert about which there has been so much discussion as to the possibility of turning it into an inland lake by admitting the sea.

The French Resident has informed me that this idea has now been finally rejected as impossible, owing to the superior level of the land over that of the Mediterranean.

The Resident will, however, go down to this Tschott from the north, and also return to Gabes by another route to that traversed by Mr. Drummond-Hay, so nearly all the country I shall traverse will be fresh ground.

We were, as your Lordship will observe, to have started on the 14th, but the sudden death this morning of one of the members of the party has caused the Resident to defer his departure for some days.

I have, &c.

(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 4.

Mr. Haggard to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 12.)

(No. 6. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, March 6, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that I this morning returned to Tunis from the tour in the interior on which I accompanied the French Resident, as I had the honour of informing your Lordship in my despatch No. 4 of the 9th ultimo.

The journey has proved most interesting and instructive, and I propose to give your Lordship an account of it in a separate Report.

During the whole course of the trip I was treated by M. Millet with the greatest kindness and courtesy, and I am in hopes that the intimacy which has necessarily grown up between two fellow travellers, who often shared the same tent in the desert, may prove of value in conducting to the continuance of the good relations happily existing between the French Residency and the English Consulate-General.

At Kef—one of our halts—M. Millet did me the honour of proposing my health at a reception given him by the colonists, I had consequently to return thanks, which I did in a few polite words, which were received with the greatest enthusiasm.

I have the honour to inclose a telegraphic account of that day's proceedings, sent to the "Dépêche Tunisienne" by the reporter of the "Agence Havas," who accompanied us.

Though this report is not quite accurate—notably in as much as I said nothing about "England viewing the work of France here without jealousy"—it gives a fair general idea of my words.

* Not printed.

It would hardly have been worth while to have troubled your Lordship with this matter, save that I have this morning been shown an attack on me in "La Tribuna," an Italian paper published in Rome, (1) for having accompanied the Resident on his journey; (2) for the character of my words on this occasion, which, even as reported in the "Dépêche Tunisienne," will, I venture to hope, be considered by your Lordship as of a harmless nature.

Little importance need be attached to the hostile criticism of "La Tribuna," if, as I am informed is doubtless the case, it is written by the editor of the "Unione," the Italian organ of Tunis, which makes it its business to be in constant and active hostility to the French Protectorate.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

Inclosure in No. 4.

Extract from "La Dépêche Tunisienne" of February 21, 1895.

De Souk-el-Arba au Kef.

Le Kef, le 19 Février, 1895, 9 heures 30 soir.

APRÈS une nuit douteuse, le soleil entame la brume. Les gros nimbus menaçants gagnent les hauteurs et une lumière vaporeuse succède aux opacités funèbres d'hier.

Cavaliers et montures subissent l'influence de cette gaieté renaissante. Notre allure se fait rapide et les 48 kilom. qui séparent Souk-al-Arba du Kef seront franchis en quatre heures.

Pourtant, les chemins sont loin d'être des pistes de parc. Une neige épaisse couvre les champs, les prairies, et les montagnes: le soleil, qui la fond peu à peu, la transforme en une boue grisâtre et compacte.

Mais, qu'importe? Notre entrain ne s'en ressent pas, grâce à la beauté vraiment incomparable du paysage.

Cette première partie du voyage est certainement une des plus admirables choses que nous ayons vues en Tunisie.

De tous côtés dévalent d'immenses tapis de neige. Au nord, la Kroumirie émerge comme sous un suaire et, aussi loin que la vue puisse s'étendre, elle se heurte à une ceinture de montagnes blanches.

Tout à coup, le goum qui accompagne M. le Contrôleur Radenac, venu à la rencontre du Ministre, se déploie au galop, au milieu d'un vallon couvert de neige épaisse.

Rien ne saurait rendre l'impression de ces 1,000 costumes bizarres, mettant sur le névé comme des taches resplendissantes d'azur, de chrome, et de pourpre.

Au milieu de cette désolation glacée, rien de plus étrange que les silhouettes des cavaliers des Beni-Ghanem, avec leurs immenses bonnets de plumes d'autruche, qui nous donnent la sensation fantastique d'une apparition.

L'Arrivée au Kef.

L'entrée au Kef est de tous points réussie et complète bien cette matinée.

Les troupes sont sous les armes, la population pousse des acclamations.

Le Commandant Racine vient saluer le Résident.

Les musiques jouent à la grande porte de la ville et devant le Contrôle, situé à l'autre extrémité, où se tiennent les habitants du Kef.

Ceux-ci éprouvent une joie véritable de recevoir le Ministre. Tous leurs discours vont bientôt se faire les échos de ces sentiments et témoigner leur reconnaissance pour le haut fonctionnaire qui n'a pas craint d'affronter les frimas et les fatigues d'une route difficile pour se rendre compte des besoins de chacun et tenir la promesse qu'il avait faite.

Les Réceptions.

Le Commandant Racine vient présenter les officiers, auxquels le Ministre adresse une de ces allocutions cordiales dont il a le secret.

Se succèdent ensuite les différents fonctionnaires, la Municipalité, les colonies Française et Italienne, les Indigènes, &c.

M. René, en lui présentant notre colonie, prie M. Millet de venir prendre le café que lui offrent, à l'école, les Français du Kef et les étrangers qui ont bien voulu se joindre à eux.

En l'absence du Vice-Président, malade, M. Guiraud prend la parole pour exprimer au Ministre les souhaits de la Municipalité.

Les plus importants sont la réfection des routes et des rues, la création d'un hôpital, l'établissement d'une voie ferrée.

M. Millet répond en rappelant les paroles qu'il adressait hier aux habitants de Souk-el-Arba.

Pour les travaux qui ne sont que d'une utilité absolument locale, il faut d'abord que les intéressés donnent l'exemple de leur bonne volonté et de leur entente, s'ils veulent se créer des titres à la bienveillance de l'État.

Le Gouvernement doit, avant tout, considérer l'ensemble, les améliorations générales qui sont de nature à profiter au Protectorat entier.

Ses ressources, sa force vive, s'émietteraient sans profit s'il s'attachait à écouter uniquement les demandes particulières.

Néanmoins, s'il vient à se trouver en présence d'efforts réels tendant à réduire au minimum la contribution qu'on lui réclame, il considérera comme un devoir de prêter une assistance réelle et efficace.

Le Kef a été, jusqu'à présent, trop négligé.

Cela s'explique par le passé de la Régence, qui était essentiellement une Puissance maritime.

Mais cette situation défavorable doit cesser.

Déjà, une grande route s'avance, lancée de Tunis. Le mois de Décembre 1896 la verra terminée.

Un chemin de fer s'impose aussi.

Le voyage qu'il vient de faire lui prouve que la nature du sol, hérissé d'obstacles, interdit de chercher la solution vers le nord; il faudra la chercher dans le sud.

Ce sera chez lui une préoccupation constante d'arriver à doter le Kef de cet indispensable engin de civilisation.

Quant à la question de l'hôpital, il s'efforcera de la résoudre aussitôt son retour à Tunis.

Il y a là une situation fâcheuse qu'il veut faire cesser.

Il y avait une nombreuse assemblée à l'école des garçons, où le Ministre est allé prendre le café.

M. René lui a exposé les désirs de la population, qui se confondent, dans leurs grandes lignes, avec ceux de la Municipalité.

M. Millet a répondu, puis il a remercié les étrangers qui avaient bien voulu venir saluer le Représentant de la France.

Il voit en eux des collaborateurs précieux.

La France, d'ailleurs, n'est nullement exclusive. Elle prêterait à tous un appui d'autant plus énergique qu'ils auront accepté plus franchement le Protectorat de la France.

Le Ministre a terminé en portant un toast, dans des termes pleins de cordialité, à M. Haggard, Consul-Général d'Angleterre.

Celui-ci a répliqué dans une improvisation particulièrement heureuse, qui a été interrompue plusieurs fois par les applaudissements.

M. le Consul-Général a rendu hommage à l'œuvre accomplie par la France en Tunisie et dont l'Angleterre n'est nullement jalouse.

D'aucuns voudraient, bien à tort, montrer des rivalités fondamentales entre les deux Grandes Puissances, qui ne rivalisent que sur le terrain de la civilisation.

Se tournant vers le groupe des étrangers, comprenant un certain nombre de Maltais, M. le Consul-Général a ajouté:—

"La réussite de la France s'explique par les hautes qualités de colonisation dont elle a fait preuve et par le choix heureux des Administrateurs qu'elle a envoyés en Tunisie.

"Le passé répond de l'avenir.

"Vous avez à votre tête un homme dont l'activité et le dévouement sont admirables.

"Je ne puis que conseiller à mes compatriotes de se fier à lui et de l'aider loyalement dans son œuvre, que l'Angleterre, croyez-le, suit sans jalousie."

Dans la Ville.

Le café pris, le Ministre a visité pas à pas le Kef, les sources, les citernes, la basilique bysantine, l'église, la caserne, &c.

Au Cercle Militaire.

A 5 heures et demie, grande réception au Cercle Militaire.

Il suffit de dire qu'elle était organisée par M. le Commandant Racine, dont Tunis a gardé un si excellent souvenir, pour vous donner l'assurance que tout s'est passé le mieux du monde.

Le Résident et le Commandant ont échangé des paroles de vive sympathie.

Cette journée, déjà si bien remplie, s'est terminée par une retraite aux flambeaux conduite par la musique du 3^e Bataillon d'Afrique, qui a joué une demi-heure sous les fenêtres du Contrôle.

Hier, à cause de l'heure avancée, j'ai oublié de vous signaler la réception enthousiaste offerte par le colonie de Souk-el-Arba au Ministre, dans la Halle aux Grains, et qui a eu un vif succès.

No. 5.

Mr. Haggard to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 19.)

(No. 8. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, March 13, 1895.

AT the close of a dinner given by the French Resident to celebrate his return from his journey, to which were invited all the members of his party, he made a speech in which, at some length and in very flattering terms, he alluded to the pleasure he had derived from my companionship during the trip.

I venture to report this circumstance as indicating a desire on M. Millet's part—one which has, I must say, been borne out in many other respects—to be on friendly terms with Her Majesty's Consulate-General.

I have, &c.

(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 6.

Mr. Haggard to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 30.)

(No. 8 A.)

My Lord,

Tunis, March 22, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to inclose, for your Lordship's information, two copies of the "Journal Officiel Tunisien," containing a Decree classifying the Artillery Arsenal at Bizerta as a military post.

I have, &c.

(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

Inclosure in No. 6.

Extract from the "Journal Officiel Tunisien" of March 15, 1895.

Décret du 4 Février, 1895 (9 Chaaban, 1312).

Louanges à Dieu.

NOUS, Ali Pacha Bey, possesseur du Royaume de Tunis,
Vu votre Décret du 2 Septembre, 1886 (3 Hidjé, 1303),
Sur la proposition de notre Ministre de la Guerre, et

Vu l'assentiment du Gouvernement Français, notifié par dépêche du Ministre de la Guerre, en date du 14 Décembre, 1894,

Nous avons pris le Décret suivant :

Article 1^{er}. L'Arsenal d'Artillerie de Bizerte est classé comme poste militaire.

Art. 2. Notre Ministre de la Guerre est chargé de l'exécution du présent Décret.

Vu pour promulgation et mise à exécution.

Le Ministre Plénipotentiaire,
Résident-Général de la République Française à Tunis,
(Signé) RENÉ MILLET.

Tunis, le 4 Février, 1895.

No. 7.

Mr. Haggard to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received April 1.)

(No. 9. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, March 15, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that it has been decided to apply the conscription, which has hitherto only been levied in the northern and central districts of Tunis, to those in the south and on the frontier; at all events, to most of them.

These have hitherto been free from enforced military service, as it was thought better to reserve what was likely to be an unpopular measure until the more turbulent and less approachable tribes should have become accustomed to the French domination.

On the occasion of his late journey, on which I accompanied M. Millet, his announcement of this decision at two places in the mountains—one the Troglodyte town of Gaber-Mokt-Mater, the other the curious town in the very inaccessible gorge of Toujane—was very badly received. At the latter place there was an angry outcry, which was met by the Resident-General reminding the natives that they had been brought to order, "à coups de canon." This provoked a perfect outburst of yells, and the Resident was furiously hooted as we rode away.

He told me that the extension of the conscription would not affect the number of troops, as the percentage on the population would be reduced.

I have, &c.

(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 8.

Mr. Haggard to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received April 1.)

(No. 10.)

My Lord,

Tunis, March 15, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that the Resident-General has stated to me that the raising of the rank of the Officer Commanding the troops here to that of General of Division, and the appointment of a Brigadier-General, who arrived here at the end of January, will not cause any increase in the number of troops in the Regency.

He told me that the change was due to two causes: the one, that General Leclerc was a very efficient and popular officer, who was, moreover, an intimate friend of a leading military authority in Paris, and that, as he was nearing the age at which he would have been forcibly retired, unless he gained his step, the place was made for him. I presume, therefore, that a General of Division must, according to French rules, have a General Officer of inferior rank under him.

The other reason was so as to give Tunis a voice in the Algerian Military Board or Council.

I have, &c.

(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 9.

Mr. Haggard to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received April 1.)

(No. 11. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, March 16, 1895.

I VENTURE to send your Lordship a number of the "Petite Tunisie,"* a French paper published here.

The malignancy of the attacks on the French Resident, with which it is filled, will show your Lordship that M. Millet's place is anything but a bed of roses.

He has only been here four months, but his actions and plans already meet with violent opposition on the part of many of his countrymen, and, of the four French papers published here, only one, the "Dépêche Tunisienne," the mouthpiece of the Residency, consistently supports him; another criticises him fairly impartially; the other two load him with abuse.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 10.

Mr. Haggard to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received April 1.)

(No. 12. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, March 16, 1895.

THE Resident-General informs me that the number of troops of all arms of the Service in Tunis amounts to about 12,000. These are chiefly composed of the Régiments d'Afrique—the "Joyeux," as they are familiarly called. These are made up of drafts from other regiments of men convicted of theft, or of "attentats à la pudeur."

In addition to those there is a battalion called the "bataillon disciplinaire," composed of men of all branches of the Service who have constantly committed offences against discipline; recalcitrant men, in fact, who are hopeless. These are sent to the most desolate frontier forts, and present a somewhat sad appearance, dressed in a sort of dirty coloured kharki suit, and wearing a cap with an enormous peak half covering their faces. Their officers told me that this treatment and its accompanying discipline is very efficacious, and that they have not much trouble with them.

A battery of artillery, and from 400 to 500 men have been sent to Madagascar, as well as 300 mules, and the officers complain that, if any movement of troops were to be made here, the force would be inconvenienced.

Of this we had practical proof during the Resident's late journey, as the teams of mules belonging to a break which accompanied us until we reached the mountains, for the benefit of those members of our party who did not care to ride, having been sent to Madagascar, those provided to replace them were untrained, and on one occasion they struck work in the middle of the Great Tschott-el-Djerid in a somewhat critical position.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 11.

Mr. Haggard to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received April 1.)

(No. 13.)

My Lord,

Tunis, March 17, 1895.

YOUR Lordship is aware that the French govern this country by a system of Departments, each under a Contrôleur, who is also nominally a Vice-Consul. This officer is in direct communication with the Home Department of the Central Government here, which is under the direction of a Frenchman—M. Roy.

* Not printed.

To this Department the Contrôleur suggests the appointment of the different native Kaïds of the towns and villages in his district, who only hold their appointments, therefore, at the good-will of the French authorities.

The French domination is therefore complete, as the Bey has absolutely no authority or voice in the appointment of even the lowest office in the country.

Hitherto the Contrôleurs of the north and central districts have been civilians, those of the frontier and south the military officers in charge of the various posts. It has been, however, latterly thought advisable to gradually replace these soldiers by civilians, as the country showed no sign of disturbance.

The present Resident-General is, however, very averse to this change, and told me that he not only was not in favour of it, but that he would, if possible, fill up all the Contrôles throughout the Regency with officers, either seconded from their regiments, or who had retired from active service.

His view is that their military discipline stands them in good stead in governing the natives, that they are, in fact, "stronger" men than civilians, especially as these have had no special training for the work of administration.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 12.

Mr. Haggard to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received April 1.)

(No. 14.)

My Lord,

Tunis, March 18, 1895.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 3 of the 6th ultimo, I have the honour to inform your Lordship that on the various occasions on which the Resident-General addressed the Italian colonists who assembled to meet him at the towns we passed through at the beginning of our journey, he always impressed upon them the necessity of submitting themselves to French Regulations and assimilating themselves to French habits and thought. "Apprenez à aimer les Français," he said on one occasion. On this condition he promised them the protection and "bienveillance" of the Government.

I had various conversations with M. Millet on this subject, and ventured to point out to him that whatever railroads he made, whatever forests he planted, whatever plains he drained, whatever deserts he irrigated, all would be useless if he could not attract a population—that it seemed hopeless to expect French peasants to come in sufficient numbers to give "mains d'œuvre," and that, as far as one could see, in the absence of Chinese, there only remained Italians.

To this view he assented, and said that he would welcome Italians here, but on condition that they became French, at least in the second generation.

It remains to be seen how the treatment they have hitherto received, and that which the future may have in store for them, will be of such a character as to inspire them with the love of France which is preached to them, to the extent of inducing them to adopt French nationality.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 13.

Mr. Haggard to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received April 1.)

(No. 15.)

My Lord,

Tunis, March 18, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that the Resident-General has informed me that he intends to do away with the tobacco and salt monopolies.

Those press with great severity on the population and bring about the most absurd results. A great quantity of the land here is admirably suited for tobacco culture, but it is forbidden, and the farmer, if a farmer, has actually to buy the inferior imported tobacco at the "débits de tabac."

The salt tax is still more glaring. There are enormous stores of salt in this country, but it is forbidden to gather it. The great "Tschotts" are vast natural salt pans extending for hundreds of square miles; the salt cannot be used, and I found the other day on our journey, when we crossed the great "Tschott-el-Djerid," that the inhabitants living on its border were actually forbidden to gather enough salt from it, even for their own consumption.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 14.

Mr. Haggard to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received April 1.)

(No. 16. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, March 19, 1895.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 3 of the 6th February last, I have the honour to inform your Lordship that the Resident-General has told me that he hopes to establish a sort of "Sonderbund" between France and Tunis.

To do this would of course entail the revision of the existing Treaties between the Regency and foreign Powers. That this will be done M. Millet apparently takes for granted, as, on one occasion during our late journey, I heard him say, "When we have revised the Treaties we will do so and so."

It may be assumed that the wish is father to the thought. He has never said anything to me about our Treaty, and if he does, without instructions from your Lordship to the contrary, I shall give him no hope that his scheme will be realized, which would, without some adequate *quid pro quo*, entail loss to English interests.

Meanwhile, the intention meets with considerable opposition even from the French here, as it would entail taxation from which they are now exempt; and I observed in a French paper the other day an appeal to the sanctity of those Treaties as rendering M. Millet's scheme impracticable. The French have also, as your Lordship is aware, a Treaty with Tunis not unlike our own.

Our import trade is larger than that of Italy, and consists chiefly of Manchester goods, which would, as in Algeria, doubtless be submitted to an absolutely prohibitive duty if our Treaty were not in existence.

It is a matter of considerable surprise to me that English manufacturers have not taken more advantage of the lenient treatment which we at present enjoy, which enables them to compete with their superior goods on equal terms as regards duties with French manufacturers. As a matter of fact, our goods are not properly represented here, and I cannot but think that if the Chambers of Commerce in England were to occupy themselves a little as regards this matter, the market here might be very largely increased.

Up to the last year or two English goods were greatly handicapped by the difficulties and expense of transit, but now there is a direct line of steamers running fortnightly from Manchester (the "Prince" line). This Company ran a line of steamers monthly from London to Tunis till the close of last year, when they had to take it off as it did not pay. They now run direct from London to Malta, with transshipment there to Tunis.

Perhaps if these facts were generally known more English goods would be brought here. It seems to me that, with the present difficulty of finding markets, the English manufacturer would do well to try and compete with the French, which I am inclined to think that he could, under present circumstances, do with success.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 15.

Mr. Haggard to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received April 1.)

(No. 17. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, March 20, 1895.

DURING my late journey with the Resident-General I had great opportunity of observing his character and ascertaining his views.

There is no doubt that he is a very clever man, as well as full of energy and determination. He is a thorough political economist, and has, indeed, written on that subject with great ability. He is anxious, therefore, to apply to the administration of Tunis the views which he has propounded.

These are doubtless sound in theory, and the advice which he gave in the various speeches which I heard him make was admirably sensible and clear.

He sees the wants of the country, and thinks that he can apply the remedies. Those are, of course, chiefly the abolition of monopolies, of taxes on production and export, the draining of marshes, the irrigation of deserts, and the improvement of communication by road and rail. He intends to do his very best for the country, will spare himself in no way, and has a great, possibly an exaggerated, idea of the importance of the task he has before him.

But this is a difficult task. Wedded as the Frenchman naturally is to a vicious system of taxation, M. Millet's lessons will meet with great opposition, and where will he find the wherewithal to make up the deficiencies in the revenue caused by the abolition of the present direct taxes? This is one of the problems which he will have to solve. Meanwhile, his views have raised a storm of abuse, and it remains to be seen whether he can weather it, or whether it will overwhelm him and he will be hooted out of the Regency, the fate which befell his predecessors.

He is, perhaps, somewhat wanting in temper and judgment, and is, I think, far too unguarded in his speech. A masterful man, nervous and excitable, he does not care to "ménager" his opponents, but rather irritates than conciliates, and will, doubtless, when the time comes, attempt to crush them. Previous experience here would tend to show that, with the present system of government in France, he will find this a task beyond his powers.

Meanwhile, he is an intimate friend of M. Hanotaux, and, as long as he is in power, probably all will be well with M. Millet.

He promises very readily, and the moment may come when he will find arrayed against him not only the opponents to his views, but also those who are disappointed at his not having been able to effect all the reliefs and benefits which he has undertaken.

I was astonished to find how much had already been done, chiefly as regards railways and roads, in the Regency. Fortunately, the country generally offers no natural difficulties; sometimes for 100 kilom. one rode across the desert on a natural track as good as a turnpike road. But the Arabs do not care for roads, they do not want them for their camels and asses, and, as yet, there is practically no European population to use them.

Railroads are being made at the rate of 100 kilom. a-year, and it speaks well for the careful administration of the finances that, even with the vicious system of taxation prevailing, this is done from the ordinary Budget, and that an annual surplus still remains; it may be judged how their income might be improved under a better system of taxation. To give an instance of the system now in vogue, I may mention that the four oases of the Djerid, El Oudjene Nefta, Tozeur, and El Hemma—which only amount to 2,500 hectares—supporting a population of about 8,000 inhabitants, pay taxes at so much a date palm, varying, according to the quality of the palm, amounting to 600,000 fr. per annum.

A premium is thus set, not on cultivation, but on neglect and idleness, for the better the palm the more it pays, the more a man plants the more he is mulcted. The last mentioned, El Hemma, is now deserted, owing to the inability of the inhabitants to pay the taxes.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 16.

Mr. Haggard to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received April 1.)

(No. 18. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, March 20, 1895.

DURING the course of my late journey in the interior and south with the Resident-General, I took advantage of every opportunity which presented itself of acquiring information with reference to French intentions as regards questions connected with their frontier and the "Hinterland."

Commandant Rebillet, the Military Attaché to the Residency, who, it is not too much to say, has for years had the direction of the Tripoli frontier question, accompanied us, and I had various conversations with him on the subject. Unfortunately a fall at Gafsa prevented his accompanying us further to the south, and I thereby lost a good chance of becoming as thoroughly acquainted with the state of affairs there as I otherwise perhaps should have been, as I had to a great extent reserved my communications with him on these matters until our being near the spot would give me better opportunities of displaying an interest in the matter.

This was unlucky, as M. Rebillet did not seem at all averse to imparting information. I must say, indeed, that reticence seems to form no part of the training of the French Colonial official, and other gentlemen whom I was with showed no desire to conceal anything they knew.

On one occasion the Resident-General was looking at a map of Tunis. I asked him to explain the frontier to me. When we came to the south he pointed out the Mokhta, "But," I inquired, "where does it go to after that?" He drew his finger for a long way pretty well due south from Tozeur. "Is that the frontier of Tunis?" I asked. "Nous préférons laisser cela dans le vague," he replied; "nous ne voulons pas permettre aux Turcs de nous opposer une barrière entre nous et le Soudan." On one occasion I heard him say, "Quand nous aurons le Soudan."

I see the French military map of 1889 draws the Tunisian frontier just north of Ghadames, but I gathered generally that the French were not disposed to consider Turkish proprietorship of that important communication as interfering with any schemes which they may have.

At Tozeur, M. Pellier, a French officer who has lived as forest ranger for many years in the regions round the Tschott-el-Djerid, and who is considered a great authority on these questions, told me that the scheme is to make a railroad down to Ghadames and thence to connect this with one which is now being made from Senegal in the direction of Lake Tchad at the rate of 100 kilom. a-year by the French military authorities. He added that it was not settled from what point the railroad was to start on this side, but that Ghadames was the objective from both sides.

This scheme would seem to be somewhat mild, at all events for the present, and I only quote M. Pellier's statement as showing the tendency of French thought and design.

At one of the frontier stations our party was joined by a man named Gadour. His father was a Piedmontese, and his mother an Arab, to the latter of which races he prefers to belong. He is an interpreter, attached to the French frontier force at Kebelli. He told me that he had in 1891 gone under orders, bearing the fictitious name of "Abd-el-Kader," to explore the route to Ghadames. He underwent the operation of circumcision previously, so as to be a Mahomedan in every sense. It being the summer, he did not go by the direct caravan road from Douz by Tataouin, as there would have been a difficulty in getting water, so he followed the route by Nahout over Sinaova.

The journey took sixteen days. He found water all the way to Sinaova, but had to carry it thence two and a-half days to Ghadames. He described Ghadames as a town of only about 4,000 inhabitants, but as a great centre of caravan trade. During the whole time that he was there there was a constant arrival and departure of caravans. It would seem likely, therefore, that the primary object of the French movements in this direction is to tap this reservoir of trade, much of which is now directed south into the desert and smuggled further west across the Algerian frontier.

After leaving Ghadames, where he was undiscovered, he went to Tataouin, Bornou, Wadai, and Lake Tchad, when he was betrayed as a French Agent and taken in chains to Tripoli, where he was released by the Dey at the instigation of the French Consul-General.

He says that, save that he was chained on the way, and imprisoned at Tripoli, he met with no ill-treatment. He added that he did not intend to take any more of these journeys, and that lately, since two French officers who came from Algiers to Ghadames, which they were refused permission to enter, there had been no fresh explorations made in these regions.

I heard a great deal about Cornes, the nominal Swiss but supposed French spy, who is mentioned in Mr. Drummond-Hay's report sent home in his despatch No. 12 of the 15th February. It appears that Cornes is really a Swiss, formerly a professor of mathematics at a Swiss University—I think Zurich. He is an eccentric being who was so bitten by the love of Arab life that he devoted himself to desert travelling and sport, and his scientific knowledge enabled him to take most complete maps, all of which he gave to the French officers, so they are in possession of a great deal of valuable information which he collected.

He was, otherwise, nearly off his head, and, having turned Mahomedan and married an Arab wife, he went completely mad. He was sent back to Europe, but has now recovered, and it is possible that he may return. He got into Ghadames draped and veiled as a woman, and though he does not know Arabic well, he thus passed undiscovered.

Captain Cointin, one of the officers by whom we were met, is in charge of the mountainous district between Douz and the sea, including Toujane.

He gave the Resident some of his experiences, among which was that of having been reprimanded and recalled by one of the former Residents for showing too much activity, i.e., for aggressions on the Tripolitan tribes.

On this M. Millet said: "Le plus loin que vous poussez, le plus je vous considérerai. Vous pouvez faire savoir cela à tout le monde."

From this speech it may be judged what line M. Millet is likely to take if he gets the chance.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 17.

Mr. Haggard to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received April 2.)

(No. 21.)

My Lord,

Tunis, March 25, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to inclose a cutting from the "Dépêche Tunisienne," detailing all the expenses incurred by France for her Protectorate here for and since the occupation.

The army expenses from 1881 to 1885 are estimated at 116,898,176 fr., and it is calculated that to this sum must be added another 100,000,000 fr. for the ordinary expenses of the army during that time. As a Government paper the "Dépêche" is not likely to increase the estimate of the expenses. It may be supposed that 216,898,176 fr. is at least not over the mark. The sum incurred in military expenses since 1885 to the close of last year is calculated at 97,330,189 fr. To this is added 12,968,820 fr. for naval expenses; 42,160,000 fr. for guarantee of interest on the Medjerda line; 2,622,100 fr. for Diplomatic and Consular expenses; 2,336,626 fr. for posts and telegraphs; 1,478,690 fr. for army expenses borne by the Financial Department; 120,000 fr.—an allowance to the Délégué or Secretary of Legation; 26,358 fr. spent by the Minister of Agriculture for an Exhibition, making the expense of Tunis to France altogether to amount to a grand total of 375,940,959 fr., or 15,037,638l.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

Inclosure in No. 17.

Extract from "La Dépêche Tunisienne" of March 26, 1895.

IL peut être intéressant de connaître le montant total des sacrifices que la France s'est imposés pour la Tunisie depuis 1881.

Ce total ne peut malheureusement pas être calculé avec une grande précision, car les dépenses militaires de la Tunisie, dans les premières années, ne sont pas entièrement

connues. On a compté, en effet, de 1881 à 1885, non pas l'ensemble des frais des opérations de guerre et de l'occupation de la Régence, mais seulement une partie de ces frais, les dépenses que l'entretien des troupes sur le pied de paix auraient entraînées ayant continué à être prélevées, sans qu'aucune ventilation fût faite, sur les divers chapitres du budget ordinaire de la guerre. C'est d'une somme qui ne doit pas être moindre de 100 millions, que le montant des dépenses militaires se trouvera ainsi diminué.

Ces dépenses réduites ont été les suivantes :—

| Exercice | 1881 | 1882 | 1883 | 1884 | 1885 | France. |
|----------|------|------|------|------|------|-------------|
| .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 40,793,081 |
| .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 35,576,883 |
| .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 23,417,520 |
| .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 12,054,303 |
| .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 5,056,389 |
| Total | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 116,898,176 |

Les dépenses totales d'entretien des troupes d'occupation depuis 1885 sont les suivantes :—

| Exercice | 1886 | 1887 | 1888 | 1889 | 1890 | 1891 | 1892 | 1893 | 1894 | France. |
|--|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------------|
| .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 12,316,159 |
| .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 10,361,230 |
| .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 9,687,789 |
| .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 10,399,597 |
| .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 10,484,636 |
| .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 10,544,527 |
| .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 10,466,145 |
| .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 10,949,399 |
| .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 12,120,707 |
| Total | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 97,330,189 |
| En ajoutant à cette somme de | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 97,330,189 |
| Les dépenses de 1881 à 1885, indiquées plus haut, soit | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 116,898,176 |
| On a un total de | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 214,228,365 |

Cette somme représente, sous la réserve des déductions opérées dans le premier Exercice, et dont il vient d'être parlé, l'ensemble des dépenses militaires que la Tunisie a coûté à la France depuis notre prise de possession du pays en 1881 jusqu'au 31 Décembre, 1894.

Les dépenses de la marine ont été pendant la période des opérations militaires—

| En | 1881 | 1882 | 1883 | France. |
|-------|------|------|------|-----------|
| .. | .. | .. | .. | 3,738,614 |
| .. | .. | .. | .. | 3,748,955 |
| .. | .. | .. | .. | 1,681,124 |
| Total | .. | .. | .. | 9,168,693 |

Les années suivantes les dépenses de la marine étaient réduites aux chiffres que voici :—

| En | 1884 | 1885 | 1886 | 1887 | 1888 | 1889 | 1890 | 1891 | 1892 | 1893 | 1894 | France. |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------------|
| .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 490,716 |
| .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 359,843 |
| .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 843,660 |
| .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 339,639 |
| .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 313,266 |
| .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 292,592 |
| .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 292,086 |
| .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 276,406 |
| .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 308,908 |
| .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 379,924 |
| .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 403,087 |
| Total | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 3,800,127 |
| Somme à laquelle il faut ajouter les dépenses de guerre données ci-dessus, soit.. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 9,168,693 |
| En tout | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 12,968,820 |

Les dépenses imputées sur le budget du Ministère des Travaux Publics pour la garantie d'intérêts aux chemins de fer Tunisiens (ligne de la Medjerda) datent de 1878,

première année d'exploitation de ces chemins de fer. Elles sont montées aux chiffres suivants dans les Exercices successifs :—

| Année | 1878 | 1879 | 1880 | 1881 | 1882 | 1883 | 1884 | 1885 | 1886 | 1887 | 1888 | 1889 | 1890 | 1891 | 1892 | 1893 | 1894 | France. |
|-------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------------|
| .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 360,000 |
| .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 1,331,000 |
| .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 2,843,000 |
| .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 2,654,000 |
| .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 2,737,000 |
| .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 2,653,000 |
| .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 2,913,000 |
| .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 2,903,000 |
| .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 2,781,000 |
| .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 2,818,000 |
| .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 3,068,000 |
| .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 3,067,000 |
| .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 2,638,000 |
| .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 2,171,000 |
| .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 2,368,000 |
| .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 2,655,000 |
| .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 2,200,000 |
| Total | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 42,160,000 |

* Pour les années 1888 et suivantes, les comptes n'ont pas encore été arrêtés définitivement par l'Administration.

Les dépenses faites pour la Tunisie sur le budget du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, peuvent être ainsi établies, d'après les indications que nous avons données précédemment :—

| De | 1881 à 1886 | En | 1887 | 1888 | 1889 | 1890 | 1891 | 1892 | 1893 | France. |
|-------|-------------|----|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-----------|
| .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 1,273,800 |
| .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 232,300 |
| .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 200,300 |
| .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 200,300 |
| .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 185,300 |
| .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 182,600 |
| .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 182,600 |
| .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 182,600 |
| Total | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 2,622,100 |

Les dépenses du service postal et télégraphique, à raison de 179,740 fr 50 c. par an pendant treize ans, peuvent être évaluées à 2,336,626 fr.

Les dépenses de trésorerie d'armée imputées sur le budget du Ministère des Finances, peuvent être évaluées de même à 1,478,690 fr.

L'indemnité de 10,000 fr. au Délégué auprès du Résident-Général de France à Tunis pour l'organisation de l'enseignement primaire dans la Régence figure au budget de l'Instruction Publique depuis 1883. Soit douze années à 10,000 fr., 120,000 fr.

Le Ministère de l'Agriculture a fait pour la Tunisie, lors du concours agricole de Tunis en 1888, une dépense de 25,808 fr., et une autre de 550 fr. en 1883; en tout, 26,358 fr.

Nous avons ainsi, sauf quelques erreurs de peu d'importance ou quelques omissions possibles, l'ensemble des charges supportées par le Budget Français pour la Tunisie.

Elles peuvent être résumées dans les chiffres suivants :—

| | France. |
|--|-------------|
| Guerre | 214,218,365 |
| Marine | 12,958,820 |
| Chemins de fer | 42,160,000 |
| Personnel de la Résidence en Tunisie et personnel du service des Protectorats. | 2,622,100 |
| Service postal et télégraphe | 2,336,626 |
| Service de Trésorerie | 1,478,690 |
| Enseignement | 120,000 |
| Agriculture | 26,358 |
| Total | 275,940,959 |

Soit donc, au 31 Décembre, 1894, une charge totale pour le Budget Français, du fait du Protectorat Tunisien, de 275 millions environ non compris une centaine de millions de dépenses militaires ordinaires, faites de 1881 à 1885.

No. 18.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received April 20.)

No. 142.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Constantinople, April 20, 1895, 8 P.M.

THE Italian Government have sent instructions to the Ambassador here to call the attention of the Grand Vizier to the rumoured intended occupation of Zuara, near Tripoli, by the French.

M. Catalani is also about to urge upon the Turkish Government that the French should be pressed to come to an agreement respecting the delimitation of the Tripoli "Hinterland."

In case my support is requested by my Italian colleague, I have the honour to ask for your Lordship's instructions as to whether I should afford it in either or both of these representations.

No. 19.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(Africa.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, April 22, 1895.

WITH reference to your telegram No. 142 of the 20th instant, you may carry out the instructions contained in the final paragraph of my despatch No. 317 of the 22nd October, and support your Italian colleague. Lord Salisbury's statement to Rustem Pasha of the 19th November, 1890, that the Turkish claim to Bornu could not be admitted, should, however, be borne in mind.

No. 20.

Mr. Haggard to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received April 29.)

(No. 23. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, April 9, 1895.

I HAVE, in my previous despatches, No. 3, Confidential, of the 6th February, and No. 16 of the 19th March, had the honour of alluding to the subject of the Treaties existing between Tunis and England and Italy respectively, and the wish of the French Resident-General to see them abrogated with the view of instituting a "libre échange" with France, the result of which would inevitably be the destruction of the trade of other countries.

I have now the honour to inclose copy and translation (by Mr. Profeit) of an article which has lately appeared in the "Unione," copied from an Italian paper, which represents the matter in a light which I have ventured to think might prove of interest to your Lordship.

I have had a conversation on the subject with Signor Machiavelli, the Italian Agent and Consul-General. He tells me that the statements in the article are absolutely correct. He was good enough to show me a copy of the Protocol drawn up between the Italian and Beylical Governments on the occasion of the suspension (a term on the full force of which he insisted) of the Consular jurisdiction. In this occur the following sentences:—

"Le Gouvernement du Roi consent . . . à suspendre en Tunisie l'exercice de la juridiction des Tribunaux Consulaires Italiens. . . . Sauf cette dérogation du régime actuel il est expressément convenu que toutes les autres immunités, avantages, et garanties assurés dans les Capitulations, les usages, et les Traités restent en vigueur."

He says that when, therefore, their Treaty with Tunis lapses next year, they will fall back upon the "Capitulations," in virtue of which they enjoy most-favoured-nation privileges—that, therefore, as long as our Treaty is in existence, Italy, and indeed all other nations which have no Treaty, will be perfectly safe.

It would appear, therefore, as the "Unione" states, that the whole question, not only of the trade of Tunis with Italy, but also of her trade with Austria-Hungary,

Germany, and many other countries of Europe and America, depends on the maintenance of our Treaty.

The importance, therefore, attached by France on the one hand to its abrogation, and on the other by the remaining Powers, with Italy at their head, to its maintenance, will readily be understood, for on this hinge the whole future commercial and fiscal relations of Tunis.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

Inclosure in No. 20.

Extract from "L'Unione" of April 4, 1895.

(Translation.)

THE LAPSE OF A TREATY OF COMMERCE.—Those who occupy themselves with the larger commercial and economical questions of Italy cannot ignore the fact that the Treaty of Commerce between Italy and the Regency of Tunis falls next year.

Many believe, and perhaps not without reason, that France, as Protector of the Bey, will prevent its renewal, and foresee therein a fresh check to our enterprise already almost paralysed in the Mediterranean.

Upon our position, which will be determined in the event of the Treaty falling, depends a number of questions of a political and international character, which it may not be inopportune to touch upon now, though we reserve to ourselves the right to develop them at greater length on a future occasion.

First of all the question must be asked: If Italy remains without a Treaty what will be the conditions under which, looked at from the point of view of the Customs, relations will be carried on with Tunis. Will she remain in such an inferior position as to see herself deprived of every possibility of maintaining the competition with other nations?

We do not believe so. All must, therefore, remember, with pleasure, that the "Capitulations" still exist in Tunis. It is true that the Consular jurisdiction was suspended as an experiment, but the "Capitulations," especially as far as they secure equality of treatment for all Europeans, are still in full vigour.

Consequently, since England possesses a perpetual Treaty of Commerce—perpetual in the sense that it cannot be departed from without the consent of both parties—it is evident that Italy, in virtue of these very "Capitulations," has the right to call to her aid this equality of treatment, and to take advantage of the clause which favours English commerce for the introduction of her own produce into the Regency.

To prove the exactitude of this affirmation it is sufficient to cite here a fact which speaks eloquently for itself. Austria-Hungary, Germany, and many other countries of Europe and America have no Treaties with Tunis. Nevertheless the duties paid by these countries, when passing their goods through the Customs, do not in any way differ from those paid by Italy and England, although they have special Treaties.

Should our Treaty fall and England's remain it is therefore clear that the treatment which is now conceded to Austria, Germany, Russia, America, &c., cannot be denied to us. Any other burden which it may be desired to impose upon us would be unjust, odious, and, moreover, unacceptable. It would constitute an exception for our disadvantage; it would be sufficient to announce it in order to have it annulled.

If then the Councillors of the Bey intend—in order to avoid this exception—to extend the burden to all the others except England, favoured as this country is by its Treaty, and France, Protector of Tunis, we shall be in good company for proving our arguments, and for the surety of seeing them triumph.

It is not now, however, the moment to discuss them. It is sufficient to call the attention of our Government to the matter, so that it may foresee in time all the eventualities which may arise in connection with the subject under discussion.

That it must do so with serenity of mind, mature design, and exact appreciation of the grave interests at stake, there is no necessity to point out. The matter is one which naturally calls for treatment, as it is natural to suppose that there will be no lack of difficulties put in our way on the part of those who have every interest in creating a fresh barrier to our commercial and maritime expansion on the opposite shores of the Mediterranean.

No. 21.

Mr. Haggard to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received April 30.)

(No. 25.)

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to inclose to your Lordship herewith a copy and translation of an interesting article which has appeared in the "Unione" on the ports and fortress of Bizerta.

The author of this article would appear to be well acquainted with the subject he writes about.

I have, &c.

(Signed)

W. H. D. HAGGARD.

Inclosure in No. 21.

Extract from the "L'Unione" of April 25, 1895.

(Translation.)

BIZERTA.—We have reason to believe that it has been decided to make no further delay in the inauguration of the new port of Bizerta, that is to say, the formal opening, with its attendant ceremonies, for the real opening dates from the entry into the port of the "Ville d'Alger," the establishment of a submarine telegraph, and the publication of the tariff of dues payable by vessels entering the harbour. Up to the present the few vessels which have brought merchandize to Bizerta have entered the canal, although some, as, for example, a ship belonging to the Esswick Company, and laden with wood, have preferred to remain outside the harbour. At the same time, it is proper to observe that it has not always been the wind, as in the case of the "Touraine," which has prevented vessels from entering the port. The tariff imposes heavy dues, which, although they may appear light in comparison with those of Marseilles, Algiers, and Malta, suffer from the disadvantage of being applied to a new port, from which or to which a full cargo can rarely be obtained, at least of a sufficiently remunerative nature. If a vessel coming to Bizerta discharges or takes on board 80 to 100 tons of cargo, she must proceed to another port or ports in order to complete her cargo or finish the discharge of the same, with the result that the vessel has to pay dues equal to, or very nearly so, the total value of the cargo.

In the meantime the Port Company has given notice to those actually engaged on the works to seek for labour elsewhere. At the end of April work will cease. This notice has been a source of astonishment to many, inasmuch as it shows too much precipitancy in arriving at the end of the works. There are scarcely 120 metres of quay built on the side next the railway station, the remainder being, as at Tunis, bare shore. Here the continual washing of the waves undermines the base of the breastwork, and it is no unusual thing to see along the route of the canal stones rolling down and hollows opening out, which break the continuity of the line. Should many steamers enter the port the 120 metres of quay would soon be taken up, and passengers would have to land in boats, or by means of floats extending from the vessel to the shore. It would be preferable, in order to avoid encumbering the canal, to still further extend the quay, and thus allow of three or four vessels taking up their berths at one and the same time. The Port Company is, however, anxious to open the harbour to navigation, so that it may reap the advantages, which everything goes to show will be somewhat meagre.

Looked at as an arsenal of war, the results obtained will be far from meagre. Twelve cannon of the largest calibre are already in position on the fort of Ben Negro; 200 cases of artillery munition arrived lately, and more are expected. The preparatory works for the laying of submarine torpedoes have been commenced. At Saf-Saf entrenchments supported by artillery are about to be constructed, and the extent of ground in proximity to this, which has been set apart for military purposes, is so large that it is valued at no less than 300,000 fr., and, taking into consideration the fact that land here is worth only 20 to 30 centimes the square metre, a fair idea may be had of its expanse. The remaining fort of Dar-el-Cudia is also fortified.

The arrival is announced for the beginning of June of five torpedoes and a pontoon, which will probably be utilized for the construction of submarine mines, and the establishment of torpedoes capable of control. In a short time, almost without any

notice being taken, Bizerta will have, when the garrison has been reinforced, as it will be shortly, a garrison consisting of four companies of Zouaves, two companies of artillery, a section of engineers, and a naval detachment of probably 250 men, making a total garrison of about 1,300. We must also take into account the maintenance here of larger and more important ships of war, and the railway, which could, at short notice, convey 20,000 or 30,000 troops from Djedid.

No. 22.

Mr. Haggard to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received May 27.)

(No. 27. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, May 7, 1895.

WHATEVER value may be attached to the views held by the writer of the article from the "Dépêche Tunisienne," which forms the inclosure in my immediately preceding despatch as to the likelihood of a trans-North-African Railway being shortly constructed, there is no doubt that the French are quite alive to the undoubted commercial advantages to be gained by easier communication with the interior of Africa, and that they are likely to foster to the best of their ability any scheme which may bring about an increase of trade.

It would seem that we ought to be the gainers commercially by any such efforts, if successful.

Our Manchester goods ought to be able to take advantage of any such increase of trade, and may, through Tunis, be poured into the vast Soudan.

It would appear, therefore, that the more the French open up communication with the interior, the more important is it both that our Treaty with Tunis should be adhered to, and that British manufacturers should be encouraged to make use of this country as a pipe through which gradually to pour their produce into the French sphere of influence, and thus through the whole of North and Central Africa. This would turn into a real advantage to England a scheme which has presumably not that amiable intention.

I have, &c.

(Signed)

W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 23.

Mr. Haggard to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received May 27.)

(No. 28. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, May 9, 1895.

DURING a visit to Bizerta which I paid last week, although I could not ascertain that there was anything of importance to add to the information already in the possession of Her Majesty's Government with reference to the forts there, your Lordship may consider it advisable that I should report their actual condition as far as I had opportunities of judging of it.

The "Fort d'Espagne" appears to be quite finished. It is, however, now closely guarded, and I had no opportunity, such as had Lord Meath, as reported in my despatch No. 5 of the 14th February, of seeing any part of it save the outside. This sufficed, however, to show me that it was a very strong work towards the sea, though liable to capture from the rear or land side.

The fort of Monte Negro is situated at some distance on the other side of the harbour on the crest of a much more considerable rise. It is not finished, and there are still numbers of men at work on it. It is similar in construction with, but, I think, larger than the Fort d'Espagne. This is probably owing to the fact that accommodation has had to be provided for the garrison, which, in the case of the Fort d'Espagne, can be found in the old castle close by. The armament is, I was told, identical in both forts. It appeared to me that in Monte Negro it consisted of four heavy and four quick-firing guns, the former in position, the latter on swivels with screens. They are at present all visible from the rear, but already quite hidden from the front. There is a ditch in the rear and on the flanks, but none in front; it is thus identical in this respect with the Fort d'Espagne. In the interior is a courtyard with a wall of masonry, which is pierced by a vaulted passage leading to the front. The internal side of the ditch is faced with masonry.

I was able to see right into and over the interior from the mound thrown up by the excavation of the ditch, but could not, of course, use a glass, so my shortness of sight prevented my survey being as effectual as it otherwise might have been, especially as I have, unfortunately, no technical knowledge of fortification.

Monte Negro covers about, or perhaps rather over, 2 acres of ground. It is apparently a very strong work; in fact, it is difficult to see how any fire from the sea could make any impression on it, for there is nothing to fire at. Even now from the front there is nothing to indicate its existence save the line of chalk of the excavations, and when this is, as it will be in a short time, covered with grass, it will be quite indistinguishable from the rest of the hill. It is, however, like the Fort d'Espagne, open to attack from the rear, and both are commanded by adjacent heights behind. It would appear, therefore, that their only object, for the present at all events, is to protect the mouth of the harbour, which they effectually do.

The masonry on one side of the mole is still unfinished, and there were, so far as I could see, no men at work on it, but the breakwater is above water all the way.

There is a tide of about 4 feet, and the Resident has told me that when a south-west wind is blowing it causes a considerable current from the sea through the canal into the lake. M. Millet seemed somewhat vague as to the direction of the wind, whether it was from the south-west or the north-west, but finally decided in favour of the former, though, from the position of the harbour, I almost think that he must have been mistaken, for the hills behind completely shelter it from the south-west, while it is exposed to the north-west, that is, towards the sea whence comes the dangerous current. How dangerous and difficult entrance will be when this wind is blowing will be understood if it be true, as reported to me, that this current then runs at the rate of from 8 to 10 knots. This may be an exaggeration, but, anyhow, the current is considered of sufficient importance to necessitate an alteration in the construction of the outer harbour.

One of the breakwaters is, M. Millet tells me, to be lengthened.

At present the points appear to be equidistant opposite the mouth of the canal.

The effect of lengthening one of the breakwaters will be to cause the opening to be at the side, even if the lengthened wall do not overlap the other.

In any case, it would seem that this change must greatly increase the difficulties of approach and entrance, and it is hard to understand how it would ever be possible for a fleet to get quickly in and out of such a harbour. It would seem, therefore, that the necessity must be urgent for such a decision to be taken, while it yet remains to be proved whether the proposed alterations will have the desired effect of sufficiently reducing the force of the current. In any case, therefore, it may turn out that this current will form a very important factor in the future of Bizerta, both as a commercial harbour and as a naval fortress.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 24.

Consul-General Haggard to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received June 10.)

(No. 31. Confidential.)

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to state to you that the information which, as reported in my despatch No. 28 of the 9th instant, I had received as to the dangerous character of the current in the Bizerta Canal, was yesterday confirmed by a conversation which I had with a shipping agent here.

He told me that, even when there is no wind (which is, he tells me, as I supposed, from the north-west) blowing, the tide in and out of the harbour runs at six miles an hour.

Quite lately, he added, a vessel in which he was interested had been in difficulties owing to this, her cable having fouled her screw.

Some little time back the "Touraine," a large steamer belonging to the Transatlantique Company, took a party of travellers to Bizerta, but as the wind was blowing, the captain refused to enter even the outer harbour, preferring to risk lying outside unprotected rather than expose his vessel to the dangers of the harbour of refuge.

The ferry-boat, which is the only means of passage from one side to the other of the canal, is frequently carried away, and it is so difficult to replace it that com-

munication is interrupted for many hours at a time. One often sees notices of this in the papers, and my informant, with reference to the accident to the ship, told me that on one occasion he was kept waiting for over three hours, while the tugs were vainly striving to drag the ferry-boat up against the stream, and that hawser after hawser was broken in the operation.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 25.

Consul-General Haggard to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received June 10.)

(No. 32. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, May 25, 1895.

THE French Minister of Agriculture, who is here on a journey of inspection, made a speech the other day in which occurs the following phrase: "En ce qui concerne la Tunisie, la France doit la considérer comme son propre territoire, comme le prolongement de son Empire en Afrique."

I do not know whether this has ever been put quite so straight before, and this authoritative statement from a person in M. Gadaud's position would seem meant, or at all events destined, to tear away the flimsy veil of a Protectorate over Tunis behind which France has hitherto worked.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 26.

Consul-General Haggard to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received June 10.)

(No. 35. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, May 28, 1895.

I HAD no intention in my despatch No. 32 of the 25th instant of conveying that I thought that the French, or rather, I should say, those in authority here, had any wish or intention of changing the Government of this country through the fiction of a nominal Protectorate into its rule under a regular Colonial Administration. This I imagine to be the last thing that they wish, for this would have to mean, not only the direct rule of the Colonial Office, but also representation by Deputies in the Chamber, and the consequent constant interference of Parliament in the affairs of the Colony. They infinitely prefer the comparatively free hand given them by the present system, the more so that, as one of the officials cynically said to me, "Whatever we do right we take the credit of ourselves, and whatever mistakes we make we lay at the Bey's door."

It remains to be seen whether the French Minister of Agriculture's declaration was the voice of the party in France who want to make a regular Colony of Tunis, and thereby enjoy some of the loaves and fishes here, or whether it was a sort of defiance to the foreign Powers interested, or again, whether it was a piece of characteristic French after-dinner oratory.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 27.

Consul-General Haggard to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received June 17, 5.20 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.)

Tunis, June 17, 1895, 2.50 P.M.

RESIDENT has appointed to post of Secretary of Commissary of Police here mar who as Commissary of Police at Kerouan was sentenced to a month's imprisonment [for] torturing two British subjects. Hay's correspondence on this subject begins with his despatch No. 41 of 7th June, 1890, ending with despatch No. 2 of 7th January, 1891.

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G

Would it be advisable to make representations in view of possibility of his taking advantage of position to revenge himself on British subjects?

The Commissary of Police having resigned to show his indignation, it is said that the convict is at this moment acting as Commissary, and that he is destined to succeed him. This I do not guarantee.

No. 28.

The Earl of Kimberley to Consul-General Haggard.

(Telegraphic.)

Foreign Office, June 18, 1895, 3 P.M.

YOUR telegram of yesterday.

Can you mention the matter unofficially to the Resident, and report result by telegraph?

No. 29.

Consul-General Haggard to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received June 19, 5.15 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.)

Tunis, June 19, 1895, 3.30 P.M.

YOUR Lordship's telegram of yesterday.

Resident resented remark somewhat, but finally said that appointment was provisional "dans la pensée," whatever that may mean, and declares that Secretary will have only mixed functions, and that he will not be appointed Commissary. Please wait for despatch.

No. 30.

Consul-General Haggard to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received June 24.)

(No. 37. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, June 14, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to inclose herewith a cutting from the "Dépêche Tunisienne," which is, as your Lordship is aware, the semi-official mouthpiece of the French Residency.

In previous despatches I have had the honour of mentioning to your Lordship the desire of the Resident to bring about the Customs Union with France, which is here alluded to.

It may be remarked, with reference to the penultimate paragraph recording the declaration of M. Ribot in the French Chamber in 1890, that "l'abandon de la Tunisie ne saurait être proposé, même indirectement, dans une Chambre Française," that this declaration, so warmly applauded by the members, is diametrically opposed to the terms of the Treaty of the Bardo.

I have, &c.

(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

P.S.—In the official "Guide Annuaire" of Tunis the first item in the "Partie Politique" is the Treaty of the Bardo.

In the actual Treaty, the concluding paragraph of the IInd Article is as follows:—

"Cette occupation cessera lorsque les autorités militaires Françaises et Tunisiennes auront reconnu, d'un commun accord, que l'Administration locale est en état de garantir le maintien de l'ordre."

The French do not stick at trifles, and in the version given by the "Annuaire" this important clause is completely left out, and I am assured that this is by no means an isolated instance.

W. H. D. H.

No. 29*.

Consul-General Haggard to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received June 24.)

(No. 36. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, June 7, 1895.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 26 of the 1st May, I have the honour to inclose herewith two paragraphs from the "Dépêche Tunisienne"—the semi-official mouthpiece of the Residency—on the subject of the proposed line from the north into the Soudan.

I have no knowledge of the scheme having made sufficient progress to make the dispute as to the route for the future line to follow other than academical for the moment. However, the announcement in connection with this subject of General Allegro's preparation of an expedition to pass in the autumn by the Tunisian Tripolitan frontier into the Soudan is interesting, and the latter may be worth watching, as the General is the renegade to whose audacity and astute unscrupulousness the French may be said to owe as much as, and perhaps more than to anything else, their presence here to-day.

General Allegro is incapacitated by blindness from personal action now, but when I saw him at Gabès three months back his brain appeared still quite active enough to be capable of forming again any such iniquitous plan as the "chasse aux Khamirs" (Kroumirs) if it were made worth his while.

He is for the moment enjoying a well-earned repose as Governor of Gabès.

I have, &c.

(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

Inclosure 1 in No. 29*.

Extract from the "Dépêche Tunisienne" of June 7, 1895.

LA pénétration du Soudan et M. Napoléon Ney:

Dans la séance du 24 Mai dernier de la Société d'Économie Industrielle et Commerciale, M. Napoléon Ney a fait une communication, qu'il importe de relever.

Parlant de la pénétration de la France au Soudan, M. Ney constate que "dans ces tentatives de pénétration, il n'a pas encore été question de la Tunisie. Il suffit, cependant," ajoute-t-il, "de jeter un coup d'œil sur la carte de ce pays pour voir que la côte s'infléchissant brusquement vers le sud pour former un golfe jusqu'à Gabès, pour se diriger ensuite vers l'est, rapproche ainsi la route du Soudan de plusieurs centaines de kilomètres. La pénétration du Soudan par Gabès est donc plus aisée que par toute autre route. Il s'agit donc d'ouvrir, ou plutôt de rouvrir au commerce Européen la route du Soudan vers Gabès par la ligne Gabès-Ghadamès-Kano, &c."

C'est ce que la "Dépêche Tunisienne," dans son numéro du 30 Avril dernier, reproduisant un article de la "Revue de l'Institut de Carthage," a dit avant M. Napoléon Ney.

Après ces prémisses, on s'attend à voir préconiser le projet d'une voie ferrée partant de Gabès dans la direction Ghadamès et Kano. Ce serait logique, et c'est la ligne demandée par la "Dépêche" et par l'auteur de l'article qu'elle reproduisait.

Mais M. Napoléon Ney ne pèche pas par excès de logique. Au lieu du tracé qui semble s'imposer tout naturellement, il en préconise un autre: celui de Biskra-Ouargla.

Nous comprenons fort bien que l'ami de M. Georges Rolland, le sympathique ingénieur qui a tant fait pour multiplier et faire pousser ses palmiers de l'oued Rhir, soit heureux de pousser à la création d'un chemin de fer qui doublerait la valeur des propriétés de son ami; mais ce que nous comprenons moins, c'est ce que la Tunisie, le point de Gabès en particulier, le plus rapproché cependant du Soudan, celui par lequel la pénétration dans l'intérieur est plus aisée que par toute autre route, ont à gagner à cette voie Biskra-Ouargla.

Pour notre part, nous protestons contre cet itinéraire qui, beaucoup plus coûteux que celui de Gabès, serait loin de rendre les mêmes services. Nous trouvons étrange

le conférencier qui, après avoir vanté les avantages d'une ligne ferrée dans la première partie de sa communication, conclut en demandant la construction d'une autre.

Le Général Allegro et M. Napoléon Ney :

Nos dépêches d'hier annoncent que M. le Général Allegro, Gouverneur de l'Arad, prépare à Paris l'organisation d'une caravane destinée à partir, en automne, de la frontière Tunisie-Tripolitaine pour gagner le Soudan.

Le Général Allegro habite Gabès. C'est Gabès qu'il a choisi comme tête de ligne de l'expédition projetée. Il est absolument et exclusivement partisan de l'itinéraire Gabès-Ghadamès-Kano. Il est, par conséquent, opposé à la ligne Biskra-Ouargla et nous sommes étonnés de voir, dans sa communication, M. Napoléon Ney s'appuyer sur l'autorité du Général Allegro, pour aboutir à demander cette voie ferrée Biskra-Ouargla. Il y a là un procédé de discussion, fort habile peut-être, mais plus que singulier à coup sûr.

Inclosure 2 in No. 29*.

Extract from the "Dépêche Tunisienne" of June 6, 1895.

Paris, le 5 Juin, 1895, 7 h. 40 m.
LE Général Allegro prépare à Paris l'organisation d'une caravane destinée à partir, en automne, de la frontière de Tunisie-Tripolitaine, pour gagner le Soudan.

Inclosure in No. 30.

Extract from "La Dépêche Tunisienne" of June 13, 1895.

LE 12 Juin, 1890 : Il n'est pas sans intérêt, au moment où nos corps élus, où l'opinion publique se prononcent de plus en plus pour une Union Douanière complète avec la France, où les progrès accomplis en cinq ans sont tenus pour peu de chose à côté de ceux que l'on tient pour indispensables maintenant, de jeter un coup d'œil en arrière et de se reporter à l'époque de nos luttes pour obtenir cette Loi Douanière dont on nous mesure les tranches avec tant de parcimonie encore aujourd'hui.

C'était le 10 Juin, 1890 ; la Commission des Douanes se réunissait sous la présidence de M. Méline pour examiner les différents Articles du projet Douanier Franco-Tunisien. Celui-ci était près de passer lorsque M. Thomson, par une de ces manœuvres dont il est coutumier, réussissait à le faire renvoyer au Gouvernement afin d'y introduire la clause de la réciprocité dans les échanges entre la France et la Tunisie. Cette clause, on le savait bien, était impossible à appliquer en l'état des Traités conclus entre la Tunisie et les autres Puissances, mais le Député de Constantine feignait de l'ignorer, et après lui M. Marty, Député de l'Aude, qui craignait pour les vins de son arrondissement.

Malgré l'intelligente intervention de M. Sarrien, Député de Saône-et-Loire, qui faisait observer que l'exigence de M. Thomson tendait en fait à refuser à la Tunisie le traitement de faveur qu'on prétendait lui accorder, le renvoi au Gouvernement l'emportait d'une voix (14 contre 13).

Faute d'un point, la Tunisie allait-elle perdre son Traité ?

La presse, heureusement, où notre Résident-Général, M. Massicault, comptait tant d'amis, protesta, les deux jours suivants, avec ensemble : le "Temps" disait de la motion M. Thomson que c'était un modèle de mystification élégante ; le "Journal des Débats," "La Lanterne," "La France," "l'Autorité," et "l'Estafette," ne ménageaient pas leur blâme.

Dans cette journée du 12 il se passa un fait mémorable et qui est bien symptomatique de l'état des esprits à cette époque : à la Chambre, la question de l'abandon de la Tunisie était soulevée par M. Pontois, ancien Président du Tribunal de Tunis, qui déclarait qu'en présence de l'hostilité de l'Algérie, mieux vaudrait peut-être abandonner la Régence que de laisser nos nationaux sans protection.

M. Ribot protestait aussitôt et déclarait, aux applaudissements du Parlement qui commençait à se ressaisir, que "l'abandon de la Tunisie ne saurait être proposé, même indirectement, dans une Chambre Française."

De fait, la proposition Pontois était enterrée par 438 voix contre 38.

No. 31.

Consul-General Haggard to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received June 24.)

(No. 38. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, June 14, 1895.

IN my despatches Nos. 28 and 31 of the 9th and 21st May, I had the honour to call your Lordship's attention to the difficulty and danger attending the entry of the port of Bizerta by large ships.

When the Italian newspaper here sounded a pæan because the Captain of the "Touraine," a ship belonging to the Messageries Maritimes, had deemed it safer to "bear the ills he had" outside in the roadstead rather than to "fly to others that he knew not of" inside the harbour, it was rebuked by its French semi-official contemporary, the "Dépêche Tunisienne," who bade it wait till the French fleet arrived, when it would be seen steaming majestically up the Canal.

Well, the French fleet has been and gone, but that splendid sight has not been seen, for the Admiral, like the Captain of the "Touraine," considering that prudence was the better part of valour, kept all the larger vessels out in the roadstead, only sending in the torpedo-boats and one or two of the smaller ships, the largest of which was the "Iphigénie," a training-ship measuring 3,390 tons.

As the weather was quite fine, it would seem that the uselessness of the port of Bizerta for large vessels as it is at present is thus established, especially if the inclosed paragraph from the "Petite Tunisie"—a French paper published here—be correct.

I have, &c.

(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

Inclosure in No. 31.

Extract from the "Petite Tunisie" of June 14, 1895.

POUR rendre le port de Bizerte accessible à nos cuirassés, il reste encore à faire sauter quelques milliers de mètres cubes de rochers qui en obstruent la passe.

Sans la présence d'esprit de l'Amiral de Jaille qui fit sonder l'entrée du port de Bizerte, un de nos cuirassés allait s'échouer dans le chenal reliant les lacs de Bizerte à la pleine mer.

Intelligents ingénieurs, va!

No. 32.

Consul-General Haggard to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received July 10.)

(No. 40. Confidential.)

My Lord,

THE inclosed article from the "Tunisie Française" is interesting, as that paper represents the views of the "colons" here and is edited by a M. de Carnières, who may be looked upon as the leading man amongst them. Your Lordship will see that it dwells on the question to which I have had the honour, in more than one previous despatch, of calling your Lordship's attention—the desire for the cessation of the English and Italian Treaties, to be replaced by a "Union Douanière" with France.

This would of course be the death-blow to our trade here—a more serious matter than appears on the surface, for I learn on good authority that, with the view of showing that France is the gainer by the Tunis Protectorate, the Custom-house Returns are "cooked" in various ways to a great extent, so as to make it appear that many English articles are really French. I have been assured, on what I cannot but consider unimpeachable authority, that the officials actually go to the length of changing the labels. Everything, moreover, that comes in a French ship is declared to be French, so, as much of our English goods are sent through France, all this is counted as French. The fact is that our trade with this country is enormously larger than appears in the Returns, and it has, even according to those falsified Returns, this year much increased. The previous remarks as to the erroneous Returns apply to a certain extent also to Austrian and German goods.

I think there is every reason to hope that, if we stick to our Treaty, this country may, as Africa gradually develops, become not only a valuable customer to England but a still more valuable feeder for us for the interior, and I cannot but express the opinion with all deference, that, apart from direct political reasons, in view of that not very distant future, the *quid pro quo* to induce us to give it up should be at once of a tangible and of an important character.

I have, &c.

(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 33.

Consul-General Haggard to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received July 10.)

(No. 41. Confidential.)

My Lord,

I HAD the honour, in my despatches No. 18 of the 20th March and No. 36 of the 7th June, to call your Lordship's attention to the likelihood of the French authorities here showing a certain activity on the south-eastern frontier, and since

* Not printed.

then there have not been wanting signs that this view was not unfounded, a notable confirmation of this being General Allegro's scheme of a so-called "caravan," alluded to in my despatches Nos. 36 and 39, which is to penetrate in the autumn into the interior from Gabès.

I ventured in my first-mentioned despatch to express the view that the first apparent object of the French was to tap the trade with the interior which now passes through Tripoli, but it is clear that the ultimate success of this intention would be the ruin of Tripoli to the benefit of Tunis, which might bring about far-reaching political consequences.

The inclosed copies of letters, which I have from a secret, but an absolutely sure, source, will show your Lordship that the French are really making great efforts to divert the Soudan trade from Tripoli to Gabès, even going to the length of ordering the caravan in question to be allowed to pass without paying any duty, and it is perhaps significant that the Resident-General should consider this a matter worthy of his personal intervention. Your Lordship will perhaps remember that in my despatch No. 18 of the 20th March I mentioned that Commandant Rebillet was an officer who had shown great activity on the Tunisian-Tripolitan frontier, and the appearance of the name of a military officer of his antecedents and "push" as the writer of one of these letters may also not be devoid of significance.

General Allegro's caravan will doubtless be armed, and will be possibly, if not probably, protected by a force, so that whether it succeed in making its way into and through the Touareg country, or whether it meet with the disaster which overtook the Flatters expedition—"a massacre instigated by England," as I see is stated by a highly placed French officer in a book written with the full authority of his official position—the result will be at least interesting, and may be important.

I learn from a sure source that at this moment a very active correspondence is going on between the Residency and Tripoli.

I have, &c.

(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

Inclosure 1 in No. 33.

M. Millet to the Authorities at Gabès.

Tunis, le 15 Mai, 1895.

M. SMADJA LUMBROSO, négociant à Tunis, se rend à Gabès sur les indications que lui a données l'administration pour acheter, à ses risques et périls, un chargement de natron et autres marchandises apportées à Gabès par une caravane Tripolitaine qui a passé ces marchandises par la frontière, franchises de droit.

(Signé)

RENÉ MILLET,

Le Résident-Général de la République Française.

Inclosure 2 in No. 33.

Commandant Rebillet to the Khalifa de l'Arad.

F. REBILLET, Chef de Bataillon aux 4^e Zouaves, recommande tout particulièrement à Si Rahema-ben-Hiba, Khalifa de l'Arad, M. Lumbroso, qui va traiter de l'achat de marchandises apportées à Gabès par la caravane des Fezzan. Il ira aussi à Tataouin voir l'oukil d'El Hadji, M. Salah-bel-Hibu. Prière de lui prêter aide et appui et de le faire accompagner, si c'est nécessaire, jusqu'à Tataouin.

(Signé)

REBILLET.

Inclosure 3 in No. 33.

Commandant Plée to Commandant Chanchemez.

LE Commandant Plée, Chef de Bataillon d'Infanterie, Chef du Service des renseignements de la Division d'Occupation, recommande d'une façon toute particulière à M. le Colonel Chanchemez, Commandant Militaire, M. Lumbroso, de la maison

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Smadya et Lumbroso, qui se rend à Gabès pour y traiter avec la caravane des Fezzan de l'achat du natron apporté par celle-ci.

Son bien, &c.
(Signé) F. PLÉE.

No. 34.

Consul-General Haggard to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received July 10.)

(No. 42. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, June 18, 1895.

MY Austrian colleague has informed me that he has lately had occasion to appoint a Consular Agent at Goletta in place of the former Consular Agent, deceased.

A few days back the Resident's Private Secretary made an appointment to call upon Baron Pereira, which he did not keep, nor did he send an excuse.

On coming some days later he said that he had, on the part of the Resident, to request that the appointment should be cancelled, as he did not want to have an Austrian Consular Agent at Goletta.

Baron Pereira tells me that he replied very politely, but *totidem verbis*, that he failed to see how the matter in any way concerned the French Resident-General. He was responsible to his Government, and to his Government alone, for such appointments, and he had an indisputable Treaty right to make them as and when he chose.

This is not the first time during his short stay here that M. Millet has unnecessarily fallen foul of foreign Representatives, and this little incident may serve to show your Lordship at once the policy that he seems likely to pursue towards them—the high-handed and indiscreet nature of the man, and the rebuffs that he consequently gratuitously exposes himself to.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 35.

Consul-General Haggard to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received July 10.)

(No. 43. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, June 19, 1895.

SHORTLY after receiving this morning your Lordship's telegram, instructing me to speak unofficially to the Resident-General on the subject of the man whom he has appointed as Secretary to the Commissary of Police, I met him in the train, and had the conversation with him which forms the subject of my telegram of to-day.

I began by saying that I wanted to have a few words with him of a purely personal and unofficial character, and then asked him whether he was aware of the antecedents of this man Camus, whom he had appointed as Secretary to the Commissary of Police here. He replied, "Yes," and I then asked if he was aware that he had superintended the torture of two Maltese. "Oh," he replied, "he believed that he had 'donné un soufflet' to a Maltese."

I then told him what had really occurred. He said in a very excited manner that the whole matter had been grossly exaggerated, that the men were not really hurt; "but," I said, "there were the certificates of the doctors." "Oh," he replied, "they were worth nothing—certificates of Italians or Maltese. Had they been French, it would have been different." "Well," I said, "there was the authority of the French Resident-General, who had given them an indemnity of 200*l.*, and of the Court at Algiers, who had condemned Camus to a month's imprisonment; that was quite enough for me to go on."

This disconcerted him for a minute, but he quickly recovered, and said that M. Massicault had paid 200*l.* so as to be pleasant to the English Government, and that the Court at Algiers had sentenced Camus so as to be unpleasant to the Tunisian Government, and so on, and so on.

M. Millet added that all this happened five years ago, that the poor fellow "créait de faim," and that he had been more than sufficiently punished. "Put yourself in my place, what should you have done?" "Not have made such an appointment," I replied.

As M. Millet kept repeating that he intended to employ the man, and I had no wish to continue a barren discussion, and as, moreover, the more he talked the more excited he seemed to get, I suggested that we should change the subject, and that I should report the matter to my Government. At this he got very excited, and said that he should not allow any foreign Power to interfere in the internal affairs of Tunis.

I reminded him that there was no question of any such interference, and that I had begun my conversation by saying that I was speaking entirely personally and unofficially, but, I added, speaking thus, I cannot but think that such an appointment must create a bad impression.

He then said, "You talk of reporting the matter to your Government." "That," I replied, "I should of course have done in any case."

He then calmed down somewhat, and said that Camus would have no executive functions; he would be simply a clerk, and then he added something about its being only a provisional appointment "dans la pensée," whatever that may mean. I tried to pin him to this as a declaration, but could not get him to go further than "provisoirement dans la pensée," and he added in a violent tone that he would be bound to no time; that I must understand that this was entirely voluntary, and that if there was any attempt at dictation he should confirm the appointment.

I then again quietly reminded him of the opening of our conversation, and said that such a statement was quite unnecessary.

I thought it advisable before speaking to M. Millet, even unofficially, on this subject, to have your Lordship's instructions, as I know his violent and arbitrary character, and thought it possible that any suggestion which in any way impugned his action would be badly received. My telling him that I should report the matter home, although it drew an outburst from him, really brought him to book to a certain extent.

It is possible that he wants to have in the police a creature of his own who will be a facile tool. Part of his conversation was devoted to violent abuse of the Commissary who resigned rather than suffer Camus' presence in his office.

As a matter of personal opinion, I do not believe that the appointment was intended to be only temporary. This was, I am convinced, an afterthought, and even now I am by no means sure that M. Millet's half-hearted assurance on this point was anything but an evasion. Why should he make such a point of placing a criminal in this post if it be only a temporary appointment?

He is quite incapable of appreciating that such an appointment might be looked upon as an affront. His only point of view is that the slightest criticism of it even is an attack on his authority.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 36.

Consul-General Haggard to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received July 10.)

(No. 44. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, June 20, 1895.

IT may be as well that I should add a few lines to my despatch No. 43 of yesterday with reference to my conversation with the Resident on the subject of his appointment to the post of Secretary to the Commissary of Police of the man convicted of torturing the British subjects at Kairwan.

My demeanour and language throughout was most forbearing, though I confess that there were moments when I was somewhat tried; still, knowing M. Millet's absolute and chronic want of self-control, I was careful not to say anything that could give him the slightest excuse for being rude, which I should have been forced to take notice of, so we parted in a perfectly friendly manner.

His remark about dictation was absolutely uncalled for. There was never the slightest hint or word that could justify it.

This is the first time that I have had a difference of opinion with M. Millet, but I have had occasion to notice that the slightest expression contrary to his ideas brings forth a flood of angry and ill-considered words, so I was perfectly prepared for his *emportement*, which would have surprised me in any one else.

The moment that I broached the subject he flew out. Doubtless, he was already

in a high state of irritation at the opposition of a part of the press here and of the Commissary of Police, who resigned rather than have a man of Camus' character and antecedents to work with him. I may mention, both as an additional proof at once of the truth of the story of the torture and of the extraordinary injudiciousness of the appointment, that this Commissary was the very man who conducted the inquiry which resulted in Camus' conviction. It was therefore not so extraordinary that he should have preferred even to lose his means of livelihood rather than receive Camus as his Secretary.

One good effect, at least, I believe that my conversation may possibly have had—that of preventing this man's appointment to the post of Commissary, for which it is generally believed that he was destined. This, I should think, even M. Millet will hardly venture to do now.

Your Lordship will probably judge from the foregoing that M. Millet is a somewhat difficult person to deal with; indeed, Sir Spenser St. John was not very far wrong when, in his despatch No. 2 of the 9th January, which your Lordship was good enough to forward to me, he characterized him as a "troublesome" man. I have always been on the best possible terms with him, and yet, at the very first opportunity, instead of discussing a matter like this in the usual manner, his gestures, and, as your Lordship will have judged, his whole tone, though his words were never actually discourteous, was as excited and violent as it was uncalled for.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 37.

Consul-General Haggard to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received July 10.)

(No. 45. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, June 24, 1895.

M. BALOSSY, the gentleman mentioned in the inclosed special edition of the "Petite Tunisie," is the Commissary of Police referred to in my despatch No. 43 of the 19th instant as having been violently abused by the Resident-General in his conversation with me for having refused to accept as his Secretary a man whose conviction for torturing two Maltese subjects he had himself secured.

M. Millet appears to have given vent to his resentment at this refusal of M. Balossy to degrade himself and his office in a characteristic manner.

It was in the same railway station, after leaving the train, that M. Millet made his violent declaration to me as to the results which would ensue if any attempt at pressure was made to bring about the cancelling of the appointment.

I am glad that it was M. Balossy and not me on whom M. Millet let out the full torrent of his wrath, for it would have been, I take it, equally unbecoming for Her Majesty's Consul-General either to have submitted to, or to have resented, such an attack in the usual unofficial manner.

Although, as I was not present, I cannot vouch for the exact accuracy of the words attributed in the inclosed narrative to the Resident-General, there can be no doubt, as I hear on all sides, that they were of the grossest nature, and that it is in other respects also in the main correct.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

Inclosure in No. 37.

Supplement to the "Petite Tunisie."

SAMEDI, à 11 heures 15, on pouvait voir M. Millet traversant la place de la Résidence suivi par son entourage habituel, et gesticulant avec violence en parlant au Général Valensi.

Qu'avait M. Millet? Quel nouveau coup de soleil avait touché ce cerveau illustre?

M. Millet se rendait à la gare Italienne pour prendre le train de 11 heures 45

allant à La Marsa. A la gare, il y avait plus de 300 personnes: des Maltais, des Italiens, les hauts fonctionnaires, les Consuls, &c.

Toujours gesticulant M. Millet prit possession du seul wagon de première, lorsqu'à ce moment précis, M. Balossy, Commissaire Central, mis à pied tout dernièrement par le Résident-Général, fit son entrée. L'ex-Chef de la Police prenait, lui aussi, le train pour se rendre à Khérédine, où il demeure.

A la vue de M. Balossy, le Résident-Général entra dans une fureur indicible. M. Balossy, qui, par respect, était monté dans un wagon de seconde, pour ne pas se trouver avec M. Millet, entendit tout à coup une voix stridente qui disait:—

"Est-ce que M. Balossy est là? Dites-lui donc qu'il vienne!"

M. Balossy, qui, nous le répétons, entendait cette interpellation, répondit de son plein gré à l'appel du Résident et vint lui demander ce qu'il désirait.

"Ah! vous voilà!" dit-il à M. Balossy. "Comment se fait-il que vous ne soyez pas encore parti? Je vous donne huit jours pour quitter Tunis. Quel est le paquebot que vous prendrez?"

Cela avait été dit sur un accent de colère et avec des gestes tellement épileptiques que M. Balossy en fut interloqué. La foule qui s'était amassée contemplait ce spectacle avec une tristesse non dissimulée.

"M. le Ministre," répondit M. Balossy, "je ne puis me rendre en France sans y être appelé par M. le Ministre de l'Intérieur. Je n'ai reçu aucun ordre. Je suis ici en congé. Et j'ai déjà, à Tunis, deux loyers, je ne puis en prendre un troisième en France."

"Comment! vous refusez de m'obéir! je vous ferai foutre le camp!"

"On parle ainsi à un chien, M. le Ministre," répliqua M. Balossy, "mais non à un fonctionnaire qui n'a jamais démerité. Vous pouvez m'expulser, car je ne partirai d'ici que sur l'ordre de M. le Ministre de l'Intérieur, de qui j'ai l'honneur de relever."

A cette dernière réponse l'exaspération du Ministre devint indescriptible. Il gesticulait avec fureur, prononçant des syllabes comme celles-ci: "Je le foutrai à la porte, il foutra le camp, cré nom de Dieu!"

M. Balossy, retourné à sa place, et, entendant toujours vociférer le Ministre, voulut descendre; mais il en fut empêché par plusieurs fonctionnaires Arabes, qui suivaient le Ministre, notamment par le Maire de Tunis, le Cheikh El Asfour, lesquels se jetèrent sur lui et lui barrèrent le passage.

Alors, pris de peur, devenu vert, à force d'être pâle, M. Millet fit monter à ses côtés des janissaires, qui le gardèrent pendant tout le trajet.

Telle est, fidèlement résumée, ainsi que peuvent en témoigner plus de 200 personnes, la scène incroyable qui s'est passée, hier, à la gare Italienne!

Il n'y avait qu'une opinion, hier, parmi les assistants et dans la Colonie! le Ministre devient fou!

De fait, les officieux disent qu'il avait un coup de soleil, mais on sait ce que signifient les euphémismes sous la plume des reptiles Tunisiens.

Voilà la Tunisie bien montée!

Quand nous nous adressions aux affaires étrangères et que nous leur disions: ouvrez donc les yeux, le Résident que vous nous avez envoyé est capable de toutes les gaffes, on nous répondait que notre opposition tenait à une raison commerciale!

Quand nous disions à M. Ribot que les abus de pouvoir dont nous avons été victimes révélaient chez M. Millet un état moral des plus inquiétants, que son agent n'avait ni tact, ni jugement, mais seulement des passions qui amèneraient un jour ou l'autre quelque gaffe où la France serait engagée, on nous répondait que nous avions des notes déplorables!

Eh bien! M. Ribot, les affaires étrangères sont-elles fixées aujourd'hui? Faudra-t-il qu'il surgisse une dispute diplomatique, à une gare quelconque, pour qu'ils se décident à replacer M. Millet d'où il n'aurait jamais dû sortir?

Si nous étions à la place de M. le Commissaire Balossy, nous savons bien de quelle nature eut été notre réponse aux injures publiques qu'il a reçues. Nous aurions riposté avec des arguments qui eussent certainement calmé l'épilepsie résidentielle.

Et dire qu'un grand pays, que 15,000 Français sont soumis au pouvoir autoritaire d'un pareil homme! Dire que leur liberté, leur fortune, leur dignité sont en de telles mains! Dire que dans une de ces crises de nerfs, par un de ces coups de soleil, ils peuvent déplaire et être expulsés! Dire qu'un énergumène de cette nature peut les foutre à la porte d'un pays que leur travail et leurs efforts ont déjà rendu prospère! N'est-ce pas navrant?

Ah ! si vous entendiez, M. Ribot, les commentaires de la population étrangère sur votre Ministre, il n'est point douteux que votre patriotisme, comme le nôtre, en serait humilié et que vous rendriez à la vie privée un fonctionnaire qui méconnaît de la sorte, non seulement sa dignité personnelle, mais la dignité de la grande nation qu'une erreur lui fait ici représenter.

Ce n'est pas un Résident, c'est un commis-voyageur.

EM. LACROIX.

No. 38.

Consul-General Haggard to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received July 10.)

(No. 47. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, June 24, 1895.

I HAVE ascertained the truth of the report of the existence in the Bizerta Canal of the rock which was alluded to in my despatch No. 38 of the 14th instant.

It appears that it is well within 30 feet of the surface, and that its removal which has been begun will take three or four months at least.

I have, &c.

(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 39.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received July 10.)

(No. 48. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, July 1, 1895.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 45 of the 24th ultimo on the subject of the appointment to a post in the police of a man guilty of the torturing of two British subjects, I have the honour to inclose to your Lordship a copy and translation of an article from the "Unione"—the Italian newspaper here.

From the temperate tone of this article, from such a quarter with such an opportunity, one might almost suspect that it may have received official approval, if not supervision, but, as I have abstained from conversation with my Italian colleague on this subject, I do not know this as a fact.

The only new incident in connection with this matter which I have learnt is that, when the Commissary of Police was informed by the Resident-General that Camus was appointed as his Secretary, and, consequently, laid before M. Millet, the "Dossier" of the case, to show the impossibility of such an appointment, M. Millet said that he knew all about the case and gave him his choice, either to accept Camus or to be dismissed the service, whereupon M. Balossy then and there resigned.

This shows that, when in his conversation with me M. Millet said that all that Camus had done was to have given a Maltese a "soufflet," he spoke hardly in accordance with his real knowledge of the facts of the case.

All the circumstances connected with this matter have made a very great and, I may say, a very painful impression here, and people are aghast at the conduct, not only so arbitrary, but so extraordinary from so many points of view, of a man who has such absolute power as has the French Resident-General in the Regency, and are beginning to ask themselves with wonder not unmixed with anxiety, "What next?"

I have, &c.

(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

Inclosure in No. 39.

Extract of an Article from the "Unione" in reference to the Dismissed Commissary of Police.

(Translation.)

UP to the present moment we have expected, if not a denial—impossible under the circumstances—at least some kind of an explanation of an unfortunate incident which occurred some days ago at the Italian Railway Station between the French Resident and the ex-Commissary of Police, M. Balossy. This we have expected, for the opponents of M. Millet have assiduously related and commented upon the incident in the public journals with such a wealth of unedifying particulars and with such bitter criticism, that we may well ask ourselves whether this silence with reference to the comments of the public is fit and proper.

We ask this with greater persistency, inasmuch as the "Protectorat," one of the Opposition papers, conducted in a serious fashion, whose articles are written with calm judgment, does not hesitate to examine the incident from a point of view which interests all Europeans settled in this country.

Indeed, our contemporary asks itself whether the public is not justified in its apprehensions at seeing an office so important as that filled by the Resident-General of France and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Sovereign at the mercy of an individual who cannot control his personal resentment, but gives vent to it, *coram populi*, in words which are scarcely permitted in the secrecy of one's chamber.

We do not wish to enter into the merits of the case between the two Franco-Tunisian functionaries, unless it be to touch upon one of its most salient features hitherto left aside, and with reason, but which is worthy of notice.

The reason of the misfortune which has befallen M. Balossy, as is affirmed, is his refusal to agree to accept as an important functionary in his Department a Commissary of Police who, while in the south of the Regency, was subjected to disciplinary measures and condemned for maltreating an Anglo-Maltese subject, in whose favour the Consular Representative of Her Britannic Majesty intervened.

This version of the matter, as yet uncontradicted, is fraught with several instructive reflections. For example, there is one which may be summed up as follows: if the Administration and the judicial authority of the country intervened with the result that the work of this functionary was condemned and punished, how can this same Administration, after a short lapse of time, so change its mind as to confide to him still more delicate functions?

Is it not, perhaps, proper—nay, we will go further, and say, is it not the duty of him to whom is confided the superintendence of police and its responsibilities, to call the attention of his superiors to the danger which would result from receiving as a subaltern a man who has undergone a sentence, brought about, as we are assured, by the inquiry carried out by this very Superintendent?

Well, then, what guarantee can there be from a Government—and this is the most delicate part of the question under consideration—which at one time, under diplomatic pressure, lends itself to holding an inquiry into, and consequently punishing, the conduct of an employé, and then rewards him in a manner so undisguised as to cause distrust, not only amongst the public, not only in the mind of the Superintendent who conducted the inquiry, but also in the very Consular authority which in the past demanded and obtained due satisfaction.

If, then, the "Protectorat" publicly demands an explanation of the want of coolness displayed by the Resident, it is perfectly within its right, inasmuch as that which its patriotism as a French newspaper prevents it from saying is being universally whispered and talked about among the mass of the public.

The public are discussing the merits and demerits of M. Balossy. The matter is subjected to a more objective and cool examination, with a result not particularly flattering to M. Millet. In the punishment of the Commissary in his honourable resistance, and in the anger given vent to in an entirely unsuitable locality, the public sees an abuse of power for reasons of political spite there, where equanimity should alone hold sway.

We are aware that our action as Opposition journalists is characterized at the Residency as but the giving vent to unjustifiable anger in a bitter, partizan, and personal manner. With such unmerited accusations as these we have not troubled

ourselves, confident in the consciousness that we have nothing to reproach ourselves with.

But let our adversaries look to themselves; that which we proclaim to-day the country itself does likewise; M. Balossy has gained for himself the respect and esteem of all classes, irrespective of nationality. To persecute him therefore, as they are doing, in this way, and for a line of action which the public considers he was justified in maintaining, is to take a wrong course, and one likely to lead to disagreeable consequences.

For, without mixing ourselves in the methods of the Administration and the police, what is there to prevent a diplomatic interpellation, which might be couched in the following terms:—

"Can you, after all, find no better method of action towards a functionary whom your inquiries showed to have been guilty of bad conduct towards British subjects under my care, and for which he was condemned by the Tribunals, than to reward him in such a way as to provoke open mutiny among your own Chiefs of Departments?"

We confess that, after the scandal just taken place, if the English authority were to hold such language, there would be no ground for astonishment.

No. 40.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received July 22.)

(No. 49. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, July 3, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that, being calling at the Residency yesterday, M. Millet walked with me to my horse and told me suddenly that the man who had been appointed to the post of Secretary to the Commissary of Police here, who had undergone a term of imprisonment for torturing a Maltese, would be transferred to the Finance Department.

The conversation which I had the honour of reporting in my despatch No. 43 of the 19th June has not, therefore, been without its effect.

M. Millet went on to say that he trusted that there would be now no official representation on the subject. I replied that I would report the conversation to your Lordship.

He was very nervous and anxious in his manner, and I take it that he is now repenting his violence, that he greatly fears the effect that the universal condemnation which his conduct in this matter has met with may produce at Paris, and that he thinks that an official protest on the part of Her Majesty's Government, which it would be impossible to conceal, might perhaps have great weight in pulling down the balance against him.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 41.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received July 22.)

(No. 50. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, July 3, 1895.

JUST as I was leaving the Residency yesterday, after the visit to which I have alluded in my immediately preceding despatch, the Resident-General said that when he was in Paris he was going to bring forward the revision of the Anglo-Tunisian Treaty, and that he thought that no time had better be lost in opening negotiations on this subject. He added that he was prepared to make concessions to us with reference to certain articles.

I replied that I had no instructions on this matter.

In several despatches I have had the honour of calling the attention of Her Majesty's Government to the probability of this matter being brought forward, but I thought it was only looming in the distance, and the bolt has fallen much quicker than I expected.

I fancy that the reason for this may be that M. Millet, finding his unpopularity here so great and so increasing as to be likely to make his position precarious, if not intolerable,

is anxious to reinstate himself in the good graces of the "colons" by a "coup," for which they are all very desirous, and which, at the same time, chimes in with his own ideas.

I do not, of course, know whether Her Majesty's Government will wish to fall in with M. Millet's views, but, as I have ventured, with great diffidence, to say in previous despatches, it seems to me that we have, without some very adequate *quid pro quo*, everything to lose and nothing to gain by so doing. As long as this Treaty remains in force there is, apart from the actual value of our trade and the large development of which it is capable, and which there is, under the altered condition of Africa, every chance of its assuming, a still more important consideration. We should lose a card we have still left in our hands to play whenever we might require it.

As I have before had the honour of showing, it is on the preservation of our Treaty that hinges all the foreign trade in the Regency other than French—so, as the French, at all events those in Tunis, are very anxious to destroy this, they may possibly attach an even exaggerated importance to persuading us to give it up, and the people who are keenest about it are apt to get the worst of the bargain.

M. Millet's way of introducing the subject was characteristic. It is difficult for me to convey his tone, save that it was that of a man who had only got to say, "Do this" and "it is done." He has become so intoxicated with his autocratic position here that he really seems to think momentarily that he can dictate to all the world as he does to his own "contrôleurs." His statement about the concessions which he was prepared to make, after Her Majesty's Government had gratefully accepted his views as to the revision of the Treaty, was entertaining in its "naïveté," and I may almost say in its impertinence, considering that, if any concessions are made, they will come from Her Majesty's Government.

In view of the fact that the Italian Treaty even is not yet denounced, M. Millet's remark would seem to be at least premature.

He is, indeed, so flighty that it may well be that his sudden announcement may be only a flash in the pan, and that we may hear nothing more about the matter for the present.

I should imagine from the tone of his remarks that he spoke in any case without the authority of his Government, but I have thought it advisable to mention the subject to your Lordship in case of its being brought forward in Paris as a result of any representations which he may make there.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 42.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received July 22.)

(No. 53. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, July 7, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge receipt of your Lordship's telegram of the 6th instant, and to state that I have expressed to M. Riffault, the Resident's Délégué, unofficially, your Lordship's satisfaction at M. Millet's having yielded to my unofficial representations, and undertaken to transfer Camus from the Department of Police to that of Finance.

I have at the same time requested him to inform me whether this transfer has been effected.

This transfer, I think, is sufficient for our satisfaction, for, if the Resident likes to employ a criminal it is not our affair, whereas it did affect us that, after what had passed, he should place him in a position where a man of his unscrupulous and violent nature could have any opportunity of wreaking his vengeance for his punishment on British subjects.

What M. Millet specially objected to was the possibility of the application of official pressure to bring about this result; I did not therefore, I allow, in asking your Lordship whether it would be advisable to communicate the substance of your telegram officially, see that, when that result had been unofficially obtained, the conveyance officially of your Lordship's satisfaction would involve in any way the expression of any such pressure, a purpose the absence of which I had indeed the intention of specially emphasizing in my note. This will account for my not having observed the inconsistency which your Lordship has now pointed out.

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But, whether official or unofficial, I do think it advisable that some record of the circumstance should be in existence, not only as a hold on the Resident, but also because I find that his perfectly uncalled-for language to me, which I had the honour of reporting in my despatch No. 43, has become known, and that, in view of my own reticence on this subject, I can only attribute this fact to the indiscretion of M. Millet himself, such as prompted him when—speaking of one of my colleagues on another occasion—he opened a speech at a public meeting with the boast, “J’ai roulé le Consul —,” the blank, as is generally reported, representing the Italian Agent and Consul-General, and the subject on which he was supposed to have been “roulé” being, it is said, one on which, as in this matter, M. Millet subsequently thought it better to give way.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 43.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received July 22.)

(No. 54.)

My Lord,

Tunis, July 11, 1895.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 53 of the 7th instant, I have the honour to inclose to your Lordship copy of the private letter which I addressed to the French Délégué on the subject of the appointment of Camus to the post of Secretary to the Police Commissary here, and of M. Riffault's reply.

I presume that your Lordship will consider that the letter is satisfactory, as it gives a distinct assurance that Camus will be transferred from the Department of Police to that of Finance, which was, I venture to think, necessary to secure that transfer, particularly as quite lately his “Chef de Cabinet” in another matter repudiated the necessity of the Residency being bound by a merely verbal promise.

With reference to the earlier part of his note, I may inform your Lordship that during my conversation with the Resident in the railway carriage his “Chef de Cabinet” was also in the carriage, and, seeing that I was engaged in a private conversation with his chief, he, with, as I thought at the time, a certain want of discretion, changed his place from the other end of the carriage to opposite where we were sitting, so as to hear what we were saying. It was this gentleman who, towards the end of the conversation, insinuated the word “provisoire” half *sotto voce*, which M. Millet immediately took up; so I venture to think that M. Riffault's knowledge of M. Millet's intention on this point was prophetic, if not apocryphal, while, if M. Riffault means by “il n'avait pas, ce semble, lieu de s'attendre à ce que la personnalité de M. Camus vous paraît mériter d'être signalée d'une manière particulière à l'attention du Gouvernement de la Reine,” that M. Millet did not understand this from our conversation, this is a direct misstatement, for, as I had the honour of reporting, it was on that declaration of mine that hinged all our subsequent conversation; and, as M. Riffault's letter goes on to repeat the very arguments used by M. Millet almost in his words deprecating our interest in the matter, I think that it is at least likely that this letter was “drafted” by the “Chef de Cabinet,” who had heard every word of the conversation, and who was, therefore, perfectly aware of what I said.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

Inclosure 1 in No. 43.

Consul-General Haggard to M. Riffault.

(Private.)

M. le Délégué,

Tunis, July 4, 1895.

ON the 2nd instant the Resident-General did me the honour of informing me, with reference to a conversation with him on the subject of the appointment to the post of Secretary to the Commissary of Police at Tunis of a man named Camus, who had been condemned by the Court at Algiers to a month's imprisonment for having cruelly tortured two Maltese subjects at Kairwan, that this appointment would be cancelled, and that Camus would be given a post under the Minister of Finance. M. Millet at the same time begged that no official representation should be made on the subject of the restitu-

tion into the public service of the man who had been condemned for this conduct towards British subjects.

Having informed Her Majesty's Government by telegram of this statement and of this request, I have now received instructions from Lord Salisbury that, in the event of this transfer removing the objection to the appointment, which I think that it may be considered to do, I am to express the satisfaction of his Lordship that the Resident-General should have yielded to my unofficial representations; and I am instructed to add that, under these circumstances, he has no wish to make any official representation on the subject.

I shall be much obliged if, in acknowledging the receipt of this letter, you will be kind enough to state to me, at your early convenience, for the information of Lord Salisbury, whether the transfer of Camus has been already effected, and, if not, when this may be expected.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

Inclosure 2 in No. 43.

M. Riffault to Consul-General Haggard.

(Particulière.)

M. le Consul-Général,

Résidence Générale de la République Française,
Tunis, le 11 Juillet, 1895.

SANS avoir été mis au courant des entretiens que vous aviez eus avec le Résident-Général, et que vous avez bien voulu me faire connaître par votre lettre particulière du 6 Juillet, je savais que dans la pensée de M. Millet, la nomination de M. Camus comme Secrétaire du Commissaire de Police n'avait qu'un caractère provisoire au moment même où elle a été faite; et qu'il se proposait, le cas échéant, de le designer pour un autre emploi. Je ne doute pas que votre intervention officieuse, dans cette circonstance, n'ait engagé M. Millet à préciser, dans le but de vous être agréable, les ordres qu'il se réservait de donner dans ce sens; mais il n'avait pas, ce semble, lieu de s'attendre à ce que la personnalité de M. Camus vous paraît mériter d'être signalée, d'une manière particulière, à l'attention du Gouvernement de la Reine. Les regrettables événements de Kairouan, que vous rappelez à cette occasion, ont reçu en leur temps, par les répressions qui les ont suivis, la solution que l'Angleterre était fondée à attendre, et les satisfactions, acceptées alors par votre prédécesseur, mettaient le Gouvernement du Protectorat en droit de penser que l'incident demeurerait définitivement clos.

Il me semblerait, d'ailleurs, difficile d'admettre que la liberté de l'Administration fut engagée aujourd'hui par des faits remontant à plus de cinq ans, et à la suite desquels, je le répète, toutes les réparations désirables ont été offertes au Représentant du Gouvernement Britannique.

Quoiqu'il en soit je ne manquerai pas, tant pour me conformer aux vues du Résident-Général que pour répondre à vos désirs personnels, de veiller à ce qu'une prompt mutation intervienne à l'égard de M. Camus; et je suis heureux de vous donner, dès maintenant, l'assurance qu'à la prochaine vacance un poste lui sera attribué dans le service des finances.

Agréer, &c.
(Signé) A. RIFFAULT.

No. 44.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 5.)

(No. 24. Commercial. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, July 23, 1895.

IN obedience to the instructions conveyed in your Lordship's despatch No. 4 of the 15th instant, I have the honour to inclose herewith a Table showing the total amount of import trade to the Regency, and the proportion of it which came from England during the years 1893 and 1894 respectively.

I must, however, premise my further remarks by saying that these figures, being taken from the official statistics, are not to be relied on as accurate. However, as the

tendency here is to diminish the amount of foreign imports, your Lordship may at all events be certain that that amount is at least not less than is therein stated.

From this Table it appears that of the total value of imports into this country in 1893, stated to be 1,535,329*l.*, 230,670*l.* was put down as English goods, and that, last year, of the total of 1,676,909*l.*, 306,064*l.* was put down as British merchandize; that is to say, that of the total increase on the year of 141,580*l.*, 75,394*l.*, or more than one-half, was English.

The order of value is:—

1. France (including Algiers, which sends a good deal).
2. England.

3. Italy, whose trade last year is stated as having amounted to 167,949*l.*

However insignificant our imports may be as compared with those which we send to many other countries, these figures will show your Lordship how important and increasingly important a part (about 18 per cent.) England has in the supply of this country, chiefly with Manchester goods.

This the French have not been able to conceal, though in their patriotic ardour they do not stick at trifles in their endeavour to make trade, other than French, figure at a disadvantage.

It is generally stated, for instance, in commercial circles here, that at the port of Tunis alone—the return in one item alone, that of Manchester goods—has been understated to the amount of 80,000*l.*

Every sort of device is said to be practised to conceal the real amount of foreign trade generally. Mr. Galen, British Vice-Consul, and a leading merchant at Susa—a partner in the firm of Messrs. Perry, Bury, and Co.—speaks as follows in a Report he sent to me on the subject:—

“Goods brought by French steamers” (by far the largest amount of steamers trading with Tunis are French) “go down as French, whether they are British goods reaching Marseilles by sea, or German or other goods coming through by Marseilles in transit, or even, I suspect, British goods brought from Malta by the said steamers.”

“The reason that no trouble is taken to state separately and completely goods coming from Britain and countries outside France, is that the authorities consider it important to make out the French trade to be as large as possible, so as to show that France is getting a distinct gain in trade in exchange for any sacrifice it may be making in occupying this country, and in paying a heavy subsidy to the postal line of steamers. In aiming at this, as much British trade as conveniently can be, is hidden as British and is set down as French.”

“Of the values stated in the Return, two-thirds may be freely set down as British, and in the case of cotton goods the share of other nations than Britain is insignificant. As the classes iron and metal goods were recognizable as largely British, it was found convenient to mass them with the class “other articles” as has been done in recent years, and thus the increase in the importation of them has been hidden.”

M. Medina, an “Arbitre de Commerce,” and one well acquainted with the current of Tunisian Trade, says:—

“D’après l’avis du commerce en général et par l’étude des différentes séries de tissus Anglais introduits dans la Régence par nos différents ports, on arrive à cette conclusion que notre commerce d’importation de l’Angleterre est de beaucoup supérieur aux chiffres portés dans ces statistiques.”

I may mention a glaring instance of this inaccuracy, which is no question of mere opinion, or even of the evidence on which Mr. Galea’s and M. Medina’s Reports are based. The published official statement of exports gives the total amount as 47,525,784 fr. in the summing-up of the official quarterly accounts for the last year, while in the official General Report of the year the amount of exports was given as only 36,932,766 fr., or a difference of nearly 11,000,000 fr. in the two calculations, both of which should have reached the same total, being of the same period of time, issued from the same official source.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

Inclosure in No. 44.

TABLE showing Value of Imports to Tunis from all Countries and from Great Britain.

| All Countries. | | | Great Britain. | | |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|----------------|---------|-----------|
| 1893. | 1894. | Increase. | 1893. | 1894. | Increase. |
| £ | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| 1,535,329 | 1,676,909 | 141,580 | 230,670 | 306,064 | 75,394 |

No. 45.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 5.)

(No. 25. Commercial. Confidential.)
My Lord,

Tunis, July 23, 1895.

WITH reference to my immediately preceding despatch, Commercial, I have the honour to inclose herewith an article from the “Tunis Française,” the organ of the French colonists, on the subject of the proposed revision of the Anglo-Tunisian Treaty.

This article may be taken as reflecting and summing up the views held here by the active opponents of that Treaty, so it may be as well to analyze it.

The third paragraph states that “the economic condition of the Regency will not be sufficiently improved until our liberty of action with reference to England is yielded to us.”

This is, of course, a question for the French to consider, but it is difficult to see how the Regency *in toto* will benefit by the realization of this aim, however much manufacturers in France and their agents here will gain. Their idea is to have everything in from France duty free, and to tax heavily all foreign produce, and I presume that, realizing that Tunis must have a revenue, they think that this can be levied from that taxation, but they would seem to ignore the practical certainty that foreign traders, finding it impossible to compete on such unequal terms with French goods, will cease coming here altogether. Where, then, will their revenue come from? From further direct taxation of the already greatly overtaxed native, or from what amounts to the same thing, his indirect taxation by increased export duties. The result of this must be not only infinite poverty and distress amongst the natives, but the complete breakdown of the revenue, and, as far as one can see, the only gainers will be the French manufacturers and their agents here; indeed, in view of the ruin which must under such circumstances overtake the country, it is difficult to see how even they will be the gainers in the long run.

The article then goes on to state, quite accurately, as I have shown in previous despatches, that the English Treaty gives the rate of the tax on imports, but then says, inaccurately as it seems to me, that according to the rules of international law, this Treaty could be denounced “purement et simplement,” as it has no fixed limit.

The terms of the XLth Article on which presumably this sweeping statement is based, do not admit of such an interpretation. It states that either Contracting Party may call upon the other to enter upon a revision, but until such revision shall “have been accomplished by common consent, and a new Convention shall have been concluded and put into execution, the present Convention shall continue and remain in full force.”

It is to be observed that though one of the Contracting Parties is at liberty to call upon the other to revise the Treaty, there is no obligation on the other to respond to the call. If, therefore, the revision is proposed to us now, and we refuse to entertain it, “the present Convention remains in full force.” It will be seen that this is the exact opposite of the statement of the “Tunis Française,” that the Treaty can be denounced “purement et simplement.”

In the next paragraph our forbearance with reference to Bizerta is quoted as a precedent for us to follow with reference to any other international arrangement which they may choose to repudiate in Tunis, i.e., that the unresented perpetration of one wrong gives them a right to commit any other with impunity.

The next paragraph begins: "The moment has arrived for France to have free action in Tunis, and for its action only to be bound by its Conventions with the Bey," that is to say, and it is impossible to say it plainer, that all international obligations are to be swept aside at the *ipse dixit* of France. It is needless to say that the reference to the Bey is a mere figure of speech, as the Convention with His Highness has never been anything but a dead letter.

It is not necessary to refer to the rest of the paragraph, nor to point out the vague threat with which it closes, of the refusal to us of compensations which we might have if we show ourselves "de bonne composition." It would be interesting to know what these compensations can be.

I have already, I think, shown that the concluding words of this article are a mere phrase. The annulling of our Treaty may, indeed, be a question of life and death for the Colony, but in the exactly opposite sense to that intended by the writer.

I trust that your Lordship will not consider that I attach too great importance to this article. If I have dealt at length on it, it has been because it fairly summarizes the views, fallacious as I take them to be, entertained here, and probably inspired by interested and possibly influential people in France on this subject, views which, though perhaps in a more polite form, may possibly be brought forward officially if M. Millet succeed in persuading his Government to submit any proposals to your Lordship on the subject.

So far the Italian Treaty has not been denounced, but only six weeks now remain within which this has to be done. It is of course possible that this delay indicates a hesitation on the part of France to still further irritate Italy with reference to Tunis, and that the Treaty may not be denounced after all, in which case it will be good for twenty-eight years more. But the Italians here are anxious, and it is on our Treaty that they really rely, as giving them, in common with other nations under the most-favoured-nation clause, the Tariff of 8 per cent. *ad valorem*.

They hope, moreover that though their Treaty be denounced, if we hold to ours their trade will, in view of the comparative failure of Tunis as a French Colony, greatly increase, and be of considerable value to them. Your Lordship will therefore understand how eagerly they are watching us, and the trepidation to which the repeated articles in the French papers here of the character of that which I have the honour of inclosing gives rise amongst them, for, apart from the general political question, although, at the same time not unassociated with it, is the fact that there are in Tunis nearly 50,000 Italians whose prosperity may, in a great measure, depend on our holding to our Treaty.

There is also another consideration which must not be lost sight of. We have ourselves nearly, if not quite, 20,000 Maltese here, chiefly small traders, whose existence, it is hardly too much to say, depends upon our Treaty. This question is therefore also agitating the mind of the Maltese colony here. They say, "If the Treaty is given up, we must leave the country, but where shall we go to?" Malta can give them no work, for it is already over-populated, and Malta will herself be a considerable sufferer, for the greater part of our produce imported here comes through that island. She has already suffered from the practical cessation of the Tunis export trade owing to the competition of France, which admits Tunisian produce free, and the cessation of our traffic, which would follow the giving up of our Treaty with Tunis, would be another blow.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

Inclosure in No. 45.

Extract from the "Tunisie Française."

NOUS avons vu, avec une certaine surprise, que, dans leurs discours du 14 Juillet, ni le Président de la Chambre de Commerce ni le Président de la Chambre d'Agriculture n'ont parlé de la revision du Traité Anglo-Tunisien.

Il n'existe pourtant, à notre connaissance, aucun motif de garder le silence sur une question qui ressemble beaucoup au secret de Polichinelle. Ce n'est pas d'aujourd'hui que le Traité Anglais inquiète ceux qui se préoccupent de l'avenir de la Tunisie. Déjà, il y a quelques années, M. Leroy-Beaulieu avait, dans des articles très remarquables, démontré la nécessité de reviser un Traité qui est devenu un obstacle à la colonisation.

La dénonciation du Traité Italo-Tunisien s'impose; elle sera faite à temps, nous n'en

doutons pas, mais la situation économique de la Régence ne se trouvera pas suffisamment améliorée si notre liberté d'action ne nous est pas rendue vis-à-vis de l'Angleterre.

C'est le Traité Anglais qui fixe le taux des droits d'importation, et, tant qu'il existera, il fera obstacle à notre Union Douanière avec la France. D'après les règles du droit international, on pourrait le dénoncer purement et simplement, puisqu'il n'a pas de limite fixée: mais si dans l'intérêt de nos bonnes relations avec une Puissance amie, on ne veut pas recourir à cette extrémité, il importe de négocier, dès à présent, de façon à ce que nous soyons délivrés de toute entrave internationale en Septembre 1896, au moment où le Traité Italien aura cessé d'être en vigueur.

L'établissement de la France en Tunisie a, sous l'étiquette du Protectorat, un caractère définitif que ne peut contester aucune Puissance. Et l'Angleterre a bien montré, à propos de Bizerte, qu'elle avait renoncé à une politique de tracasseries qui n'est pas digne d'une grande nation.

L'heure est venue où la France doit être libre de se mouvoir en Tunisie, sans que son action y rencontre d'autres limites que celles de ses Conventions avec le Bey. C'est une question de bon sens, et les Anglais sont gens trop pratiques pour s'acharner encore à discuter des droits qu'ils ont acquis le jour où ils ont reconnu notre Protectorat sur la Régence. En se montrant de bonne composition, ils obtiendront certainement des compensations que la stricte légalité leur eût refusées s'ils cherchaient à nous créer des embarras.

Nous adjurons le Ministre des Affaires Étrangères de ne pas oublier que la suppression des Traités Italo- et Anglo-Tunisiens est pour notre Colonie une question de vie ou de mort!

No. 46.

Mr. Howard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 14.)

(No. 263.)

Paris, August 13, 1895.

My Lord,

WITH reference to Mr. Haggard's despatch No. 50 of the 3rd ultimo I have the honour to inclose a leading article which has appeared in the "Matin," drawing attention to the fact that unless the Italian Treaty with Tunis of the 8th September, 1868, is not denounced before the 8th proximo, according to the terms of the same it will be renewed *ipso facto* for another twenty-eight years.

In the interests of Tunis, where only a Protectorate exists, but where Frenchmen are as much at home as in Algeria as far as foreign nations are concerned, the writer urges the denunciation of the Treaty, as also the abrogation or at all events the modification of the Tunisian Convention with England of 1875, which provides that the two Contracting Parties may demand a revision of the same after it has been in force for seven years after its signature.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HENRY HOWARD.

Inclosure in No. 46.

Extract from the "Matin" of August 12, 1895.

LE Protectorat de la France sur la Tunisie, qui dure depuis tantôt quinze années, touche à une heure psychologique, à une échéance importante dont on doit se soucier dès à présent. Il s'agit de l'expiration du Traité de Commerce qui lie la Régence à l'Italie. Ce Traité, conclu pour vingt-huit ans, est du 8 Septembre, 1868; il serait renouvelé *ipso facto* pour une même durée s'il n'était pas dénoncé douze mois avant le terme fixé. C'est dire que la dénonciation doit en être faite sans retard dans un délai maximum de trois semaines.

Il est probable qu'on y songe au Ministère des Affaires Étrangères; mais il serait bon que le désir de ne pas brusquer les choses et de ne pas soulever trop de mécontentement à Rome n'entraînat pas nos Agents à se laisser jouer par les fins diplomates que sont les Italiens.

On ne saurait avoir un instant d'hésitation et se laisser arrêter par des considérations secondaires: le Traité avec l'Italie doit être dénoncé; il doit l'être régulièrement, officiellement, avant le 8 Septembre prochain. Le dé-

veloppement économique de la Tunisie et l'avenir même du Protectorat Français l'exigent.

C'est par ce Traité et par celui moins important, fait par le Bey avec l'Angleterre en 1875, que notre action à Tunis est paralysée doublement, au point de vue politique comme au point de vue économique. Il suffit pour s'en convaincre de jeter un coup d'œil sur le Traité Italien du 8 Septembre, 1868.

Dans son Article I^{er}, il confirme tous les privilèges et immunités accordés aux Italiens "par les usages et les Traités antérieurement existants." Il donne ensuite à l'Italie le traitement de la nation la plus favorisée : "Il est expressément entendu," y est-il dit, "que tous les droits, privilèges et immunités que le Royaume de Tunis accorde à présent et pourrait accorder à l'avenir ou dont il permettrait la jouissance, à quelque titre que se soit, aux représentants, aux citoyens, aux navires de toute autre Puissance étrangère, seront accordés aux représentants, aux citoyens, aux navires, au commerce, et à la navigation du Royaume d'Italie."

Voilà qui est clair. Et comme la France, malgré l'établissement du Protectorat qui lui a coûté quelques centaines de millions, malgré les quinze millions qu'elle dépense annuellement en Tunisie, est restée une "Puissance étrangère," tout ce qui serait accordé à ses nationaux et à son commerce le serait à l'Italie.

Cette condition est confirmée, étendue dans les autres Articles du Traité du 8 Septembre, 1868. L'Article II dit en propres termes :—

"Les navires de guerre Italiens seront traités et reçus dans les eaux et dans les ports du Royaume de Tunis de la même manière que l'on pratique à l'égard des navires de guerre de la Puissance la plus révéérée et la plus privilégiée."

C'est là le motif pour lequel l'escadre Française a hésité de longs mois avant d'entrer dans notre superbe port de Bizerte, construit par les Français, avec de l'argent Français, et armé de canons Français !

Il est vrai de dire que le Traité avec l'Italie assure, à titre de réciprocité, un traitement de faveur "aux navires de guerre Tunisiens." La chose semble avoir été écrite sérieusement ; mais il est difficile de lire de même.

Les avantages accordés aux Italiens sont précisés et consolidés en quelque sorte dans le Traité de 1868. L'Article IX stipule que les produits, quels qu'ils soient, de l'Italie pourront être introduits en Tunisie "sans payer de taxes ou de droits plus élevés que ceux imposés sur les marchandises semblables provenant de l'Etat le plus favorisé." Ce n'est pas tout ; voici qui est mieux encore : "Le Gouvernement de Son Altesse le Bey s'oblige à ne pas augmenter, envers l'Italie, les droits actuels de douane d'importation et droits maritimes sans s'être entendu à ce sujet avec le Gouvernement Italien." Et le Traité avec l'Angleterre, qui se combine avec celui que nous analysons, fixe à 8 pour cent de la valeur de la marchandise, au maximum, le montant des droits de douane à percevoir.

En sorte que la Tunisie, non seulement ne peut accorder aucun avantage économique à la France qui la protège, lui assure la paix et la prospérité, mais elle n'a pas le pouvoir de se donner de bonnes finances en établissant des taxes sur certaines marchandises, comme l'alcool par exemple. En sorte que la population, et spécialement la garnison Française, sont empoisonnées d'alcools, d'eaux-de-vie et d'absinthe de basse qualité à des prix d'un bon marché fabuleux. On a un litre d'absinthe à Tunis pour la même somme qu'on en paierait un verre à Paris ou à Londres.

La Tunisie, ainsi mise financièrement et économiquement en tutelle, l'est encore politiquement par les droits exorbitants accordés aux Italiens, par les libertés dont ils jouissent et dont les Français eux-mêmes ne jouissent pas, par la quasi souveraineté de leur Consul. Cela leur permet de constituer un Etat dans l'Etat Tunisien. Le Gouvernement faible et impuissant des Beys pouvait accepter une pareille situation ; elle n'est pas tolérable là où flotte le drapeau Français.

C'est ce dont nos Résidents à Tunis ne se pénètrent pas assez, ce dont notre Ministère des Affaires Étrangères doit être convaincu : la Tunisie est aujourd'hui terre Française ; le Protectorat n'est qu'une forme de Gouvernement, meilleure que l'Administration directe lorsqu'elle permet de mieux réaliser l'équilibre nécessaire entre les intérêts des colons Français et ceux également respectables de la population indigène. A l'égard de l'étranger, nous devons être chez nous en Tunisie aussi bien qu'en Algérie.

La rupture du Traité avec l'Italie, qui arrive régulièrement, à la date fixée

pour son expiration, permettra d'achever une œuvre restée précaire et incomplète. La Tunisie, débarrassée de ses entraves, pourra prendre un développement économique nouveau et nouer avec la France les relations commerciales étroites, pour ne pas dire exclusives, où nous trouverons la compensation des sacrifices antérieurement consentis.

La dénonciation du Traité de Commerce entre l'Italie et la Tunisie entraînera la rupture ou la revision du Traité que celle-ci a signé avec l'Angleterre. Les Anglais ont, dans la Régence, des intérêts infimes, pour ne pas dire nuls ; et si le Traité de 1875 ne fixe pas un délai ferme pour son expiration, il dit expressément qu'à toute époque, après une période de sept années à partir de sa date, "chacune des Hautes Parties Contractantes aura le droit de demander à l'autre sa revision." Depuis 1882, le droit à revision du Traité avec l'Angleterre est donc ouvert. Il sera aisé de le faire valoir quand le Traité avec l'Italie aura été dénoncé.

Le Gouvernement Français, en établissant son Protectorat sur la Tunisie, s'était porté garant de l'exécution des Traités existants entre le Bey et les Puissances Européennes. Il a tenu la parole donnée, et son action, pendant quinze ans, en a été contrariée, paralysée dans une large mesure.

La situation peut heureusement changer aujourd'hui. Il n'y aurait aucune bonne raison à donner pour la faire durer plus longtemps.

No. 47.

Mr. Howard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 15.)

(No. 265.)

My Lord,

Paris, August 14, 1895.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 263 of the 13th instant, in which I inclosed an extract of the "Matin," respecting the Tunisian Treaties of 1868 and 1875 with Italy and England respectively, I have the honour to transmit herewith an article of the "Débats" on the same subject.

The "Débats," as did the "Matin," urges the denunciation of the Italian Treaty. With reference to that with England, it is stated that as no limit to the same is therein mentioned, either party would seem to have the right to denounce it, but even if this interpretation be not accepted, the English imports into Tunis are of so small an amount that it may be hoped that a modification of the Convention may be arrived at through friendly negotiations.

In the article of the "Matin," forwarded in my above-named despatch, it was mentioned that either of the Contracting Parties to the Anglo-Tunisian Treaty might demand its revision seven years after the signature of the same, but the writer omitted to state, or did not know, that according to Article XL of that Convention, "until that revision shall have been accomplished by common consent, and a new Convention shall have been concluded and put into operation, the present shall continue and remain in full force and effect."

I have, &c.
(Signed) HENRY HOWARD.

Inclosure in No. 47.

Extract from the "Débats" of August 13, 1895.

IL y a quelques mois, au printemps dernier, nous publions une lettre de Tunisie que nous adressait notre collaborateur, M. Paul Leroy-Beaulieu, et où, le premier dans la presse, il signalait à l'attention publique la question du Traité de Commerce Italo-Tunisien. Il est nécessaire d'y revenir aujourd'hui, car à peine trois semaines nous séparent du moment où le Gouvernement va avoir à prendre à ce sujet la décision qu'on attend de lui.

Au moment où les troupes Françaises entrèrent dans la Régence, elle était liée à l'Europe par divers Traités de Commerce. Il semble que, en droit strict, la France, qui devenait Puissance Protectrice, aurait pu, malgré ces Conventions antérieures, régler à son gré, et sans tenir pour applicable la clause de la nation la plus favorisée, ses relations commerciales avec la Tunisie. C'est ainsi que l'Autriche-Hongrie en avait usé avec la

Bosnie et l'Herzégovine, et nous pouvions fort bien invoquer ce précédent; mais notre Gouvernement y mit des scrupules; il ne crut pas devoir créer des privilèges en notre faveur et il se borna à ne pas renouveler les divers Traités, à mesure qu'ils arrivaient à terme. Aujourd'hui, il n'y a plus entre la Tunisie et les Puissances que deux Traités qui contiennent la clause de la nation la plus favorisée: l'un est le Traité avec l'Angleterre, signé sans fixation de durée; l'autre est le Traité avec l'Italie. Celui-ci, conclu pour vingt-huit ans, expirera le 8 Septembre, 1896, si on le dénonce avant le 8 Septembre, 1895; faute de quoi, il se renouvellera de lui-même par voie de tacite reconduction. C'est ce Traité qu'il est nécessaire de dénoncer, afin d'avoir dorénavant la main libre, ou à peu près libre, en Tunisie.

En effet, il a singulièrement empêché depuis quinze ans le développement de nos relations commerciales avec la Régence. Il eût paru naturel, dès le début de notre établissement, de créer une Union Douanière entre les deux pays; mais c'est toujours le Traité Italo-Tunisien qu'on objectait à Paris pour ne pas faire droit aux réclamations des intéressés. Et ces réclamations étaient très vives parfois; quoiqu'on en dit en France, et, malgré sa prospérité indéniable, la Tunisie a traversé diverses crises assez sérieuses ces dernières années, et il fallut bien s'en rendre compte; la situation, en 1890 notamment, présentait de tels inconvénients que M. Ribot, alors Ministre des Affaires Étrangères, ne crut pas pouvoir la laisser durer plus longtemps et il créa une sorte de régime mixte qui permit de faire certains avantages au commerce Tunisien sans éveiller aucune susceptibilité. Ce régime, d'ailleurs, ne peut avoir qu'un caractère absolument transitoire et l'on ne saurait douter qu'il faille profiter de l'occasion qui s'offre pour supprimer les plus graves difficultés qui se sont présentées et nous rendre, en partie, notre liberté d'action.

Le seul régime de tolérance appliqué depuis 1890 à la Tunisie a eu des effets excellents; le commerce extérieur de ce pays s'est augmenté aussitôt de près de 50 pour cent; il est passé d'une moyenne de 50 millions environ à près de 75 millions, et l'on sait que les deux tiers de ce commerce s'effectuent avec la France et l'Algérie. En 1894, la France a exporté pour 23 millions et l'Algérie pour près de 2 millions en Tunisie, et les exportations de la Régence se sont élevées à 19 millions pour la France et à 6 millions pour l'Algérie. Ces chiffres sont éloquentes, et l'on peut imaginer quel essor prendraient les relations entre les deux pays le jour où elles seraient délivrées des entraves qui les gênent encore. A la vérité, il restera toujours le Traité avec l'Angleterre; mais le fait même qu'il est conclu sans terme paraît marquer qu'il peut être dénoncé au gré de l'une des deux parties; au reste, en admettant même que cette interprétation ne soit pas admise, les importations Anglaises en Tunisie sont assez faibles (2,500,000 fr. d'importations directes et 6 millions par Malte) pour qu'il soit permis d'espérer que des négociations amicalement menées arrivent à obtenir une modification du régime présent. C'est donc de la dénonciation du Traité avec l'Italie que dépend l'avenir; l'Italie qui la prévoit sans doute n'y pourra voir aucune marque d'hostilité et ses intérêts commerciaux n'en seront guère lésés, puisque son chiffre d'affaires avec la Tunisie ne s'élève pas à plus de 7 millions. Nous espérons que le Gouvernement Français ne faillira pas à son devoir et que, à partir du 8 Septembre, 1896, la France et la Tunisie auront toute liberté d'établir comme elles le voudront leurs relations commerciales.

No. 48.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 19.)

(No. 59.)
My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to inclose to you two extracts from the "Dépêche Tunisienne" with reference to the port of Bizerte.

These may be taken as representing the intentions with reference to Bizerte, though it yet remains to be proved whether, for the present at least, these intentions will be capable of full realization.

It is reported that Admiral Fournier and his officers, who were lately there with a squadron of torpedo-boats, occupied themselves in measuring the land and surveying in the immediate vicinity of the lake, and it is supposed that this was preparatory to the construction of the docks of the future naval arsenal. They were, however, not there long enough to do more than a very superficial amount of observation.

I have, &c.

(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

Inclosure 1 in No. 48.

Extract from the "Dépêche Tunisienne" of June 25, 1895.

AUX patriotes qui se montrent peines de la participation de la France à la grande manifestation navale de Kiel, il n'est pas inutile de rappeler que le 4 Juin dernier, la France toute seule se livrait à une manifestation navale dont l'importance leur a sans doute échappé, car ils ont perdu une belle occasion d'exulter.

Il s'agissait aussi de l'inauguration d'un canal ou, pour parler plus exactement, de la prise de possession par la marine militaire Française d'un établissement maritime à peine ouvert d'hier au commerce et à la navigation.

Le nouveau canal Français n'a certainement pas les dimensions grandioses de la voie maritime que l'Empereur Guillaume a fait ouvrir entre la Baltique et la Mer du Nord. Sa longueur n'est, en effet, que de 1,500 mètres au lieu de 98 kilom. du canal Allemand; mais sa largeur, à la cuvette, est de 120 mètres et sa profondeur de 9 mètres. C'est donc lui aussi, un canal ouvert aux plus grands bâtiments de guerre, comme aux plus grands bâtiments marchands; cuirassés et paquebots pourront y circuler à l'aise, par tous les temps, sans avoir même à se préoccuper du courant et de l'étiage de la marée, sans avoir besoin de stationner, pour entrer ou sortir, dans une de ces écluses où les opérations sont toujours si longues et si délicates.

C'est qu'en effet notre canal, à nous, met en communication les eaux de la Méditerranée avec les eaux de ce grand lac naturel caché derrière Bizerte, qui forme un des plus beaux rapports de la Tunisie à la France.

Nous n'avons pas besoin de donner à nos lecteurs la description de cette partie de la côte Tunisienne où s'élevait, il y a quelques années, une simple bourgade de pêcheurs, dont les barques seules pouvaient franchir la lagune séparant la pleine mer du lac, et où s'élèvera bientôt toute une ville neuve, commerçante et industrielle.

Tout le monde connaît maintenant Bizerte, au moins de nom; mais ce que l'on ne sait pas suffisamment, c'est qu'une transformation complète de ce port s'est accomplie en quatre années par les soins d'ingénieurs Français et avec des capitaux Français. Cette transformation n'a pas eu seulement pour but d'ouvrir une nouvelle escale aux steamers qui sillonnent le bassin Méditerranéen, mais avant tout d'ouvrir à notre marine militaire, sur la côte septentrionale de l'Afrique, un établissement qui peut être considéré comme sans rival par sa disposition topographique et par ses vastes proportions.

On a déjà comparé le Lac de Bizerte à l'étang de Berre et à la rade de Brest, mais il a sur celle-ci et sur celui-là l'avantage d'un accès infiniment plus commode et d'un abri plus parfait encore. Il n'est point balayé comme l'un et l'autre par de bourrasques de nord-ouest ou de sud-ouest qui en rendent parfois la navigation périlleuse pour les bateaux d'un faible tonnage.

Déjà, depuis l'année dernière, plusieurs navires de commerce, et notamment des paquebots de la Compagnie Transatlantique, étaient venus s'amarrer le long des quais de Bizerte, attestant ainsi la praticabilité de l'avant-port et du Canal pour des bâtiments de fort tonnage. Il appartenait à la marine militaire de venir à son tour visiter le nouveau mouillage qui doit lui offrir des ressources si précieuses en temps de guerre; c'est ce qu'elle a fait, il y a une quinzaine de jours à peine.

Les trois divisions formant l'escadre active de la Méditerranée, sous les ordres de l'Amiral de La Jaille, sont venues en quelque sorte prendre officiellement possession de Bizerte.

Tandis que les vaisseaux cuirassés s'arrêtaient dans l'avant-port, le grand croiseur "Suchet," accompagné du "Wattignies" et du "Faucon," et des avisos torpilleurs "Lévrier," "Argonaute," et "Léger" s'engageait dans le Canal; puis, après avoir évolué dans le lac, ces navires venaient mouiller devant Raz-el-Ouzir.

Désormais, la France a à sa disposition un port militaire de plus, qu'elle a le devoir d'outiller et de protéger dans la limite de ses ressources, afin d'être un jour à la hauteur du rôle auquel la nature semble l'avoir prédestinée. N'oublions pas que Bizerte doit devenir la grande escale Méditerranéenne des bâtiments transitant par Gibraltar et Suez, le grand entrepôt de charbon Français, rivalisant avec les entrepôts Anglais de Gibraltar et de Malte, enfin une des meilleures bases d'opérations de notre flotte opérant contre les forces navales de la Triple Alliance et contre celles de l'Angleterre.

Bizerte doit devenir pour ainsi dire un Toulon Africain, avec Bonifacio pour trait d'union entre lui et le Toulon Européen.

Nous avons donc raison de dire, en commençant, que la petite manifestation de la

France dans les eaux de la Tunisie, le 4 Juin, quoique s'étant faite sans le concours des marines étrangères, sans un seul coup de canon, sans solennité, mais avec ce caractère de grandeur et de simplicité que l'on retrouve partout où notre pavillon et nos marins sont de la fête, avait une signification exceptionnelle. Ceux qui s'affligent de voir le pavillon Français flotter à Kiel trouveront peut-être quelque consolation en songeant que notre marine l'a également fait flotter pour l'inauguration d'un canal qui rendra peut-être, un jour, à la France des services aussi grands que le canal du nord à l'Allemagne.

Inclosure 2 to No. 48.

Extract from the "Dépêche Tunisienne" of July 26, 1895.

ALGER ou Bizerte?

De "Petit Colon Algérien" :—

"On s'occupe beaucoup en ce moment au Ministère de la Marine du port de Bizerte, où il est question de l'établissement de grands ateliers pour les réparations et de magasins d'approvisionnements pour nos escadres. Les devis sont préparés et ce moment et le port de Toulon sera appelé à fournir un certain matériel et outillage.

"Ainsi, voilà probablement Bizerte sur le point d'obtenir ce que nous devrions avoir à Alger depuis longtemps, et ce que nous réclamons à nos autorités locales trop indifférentes.

"Depuis trois ans, M. Marchal, reprenant au Conseil Supérieur les idées qu'il a souvent développées dans le 'Petit Colon', a fait adopter et renouveler, chaque année, un vœu pour obtenir la création de grands ateliers maritimes de réparation dans le port d'Alger.

"Le vœu est approuvé par le Gouverneur, mais la haute Administration des Ponts et Chaussées et celle de la Marine ne font absolument rien pour hâter sa réalisation.

"Nos superbes bassins de radoub restent inutilisés, pendant que Gibraltar s'organise contre nous. C'est le désert de Bizerte qui profitera de cette situation d'ateliers qui reviendrait logiquement à Alger."

No. 49.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 19.)

(No. 26. Commercial. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, July 29, 1895.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 22, Commercial, of the 9th July, I have the honour to inclose an extract from the "Dépêche Tunisienne" with reference to the Tunisian phosphate beds.

Those near Gafsa are, I have been told by the Directors of Agriculture and Public Works, who have inspected them, of extraordinary richness, and there are, as it appears, others in the Regency.

Perhaps it is to the export duty on these that the Government are looking forward to supply the revenue which would be lost by the destruction of foreign import trade.

It is, however, at least, not to be expected that if our Treaty is done away with Englishmen will have a chance of receiving any compensation by the gift of Concessions. As far as one can judge, the "treason" of the Algerian Government in allowing British subjects to work the Algerian phosphate beds has excited such patriotic indignation that it is not likely to be repeated here, except possibly under very expensive conditions. It is possible that this may be the real reason of the existence in the Concession of the terms which have roused the bile of the "Dépêche," the expression of which is somewhat remarkable in view of the fact of that paper being the paid servant of the French Residency, against which this article is, in fact, a revolt.

I have, &c.

(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

Inclosure in No. 49.

Extract from the "Dépêche Tunisienne" of July 28, 1895.

IL y a quelques jours à peine, le 9 Juillet, M. le Sénateur Pauliat dénonçait devant la Chambre Haute, dans une interpellation qui fit grand bruit, les manœuvres répréhensibles entachant, selon lui, de nullité les Concessions faites à des particuliers dans la région des phosphates dits de Tebessa.

Dans quelques semaines, peut-être, le Parlement devra examiner à leur tour les Articles qui servent de bases à l'accord conclu le 25 Juin dernier entre le Gouvernement Beylical et les concessionnaires des phosphates Tunisiens.

On sait en quoi consiste l'économie principale de l'Acte dont nous parlons et qui vient d'être passé entre M. Pavillier, Directeur-Général des Travaux Publics, et M. Maurice de Robert.

NOUS avons souvent entretenu nos lecteurs des efforts faits par le Gouvernement pour tirer le meilleur parti possible des gisements de Gafsa; l'intention bien arrêtée dans son esprit, et que nous ne saurions blâmer, de subordonner l'autorisation d'exploiter à l'obligation de construire une voie ferrée de 250 kilom. reliant les gisements au port de Sfax, avait, plusieurs fois déjà, amené l'avortement des négociations.

Celles-ci viennent enfin d'aboutir, mais d'une façon absolument inattendue; non content, en effet, d'abandonner, par l'Article 6, aux concessionnaires l'exploitation des phosphates qui se rencontrent sur les terrains domaniaux situés au sud-ouest de Gafsa, dans un périmètre comprenant les Djebels Zitoun, Zimra, Alima, Seldja, Metlaoui, et Stah, et de leur céder, à titre gratuit, en toute propriété, 30,000 hectares de terrains domaniaux cultivables, situés dans le contrôle de Sfax, générosité fort compréhensible à notre sens, le Directeur-Général des Travaux Publics a introduit dans la Convention, sous le No. 13, un Article qui renverse toutes les idées de justice et d'équité admises jusqu'ici.

On partagera certainement notre appréciation quand on saura qu'aux termes de cet Article, "en ce qui concerne les gisements connus ou à découvrir dans les terrains domaniaux situés en dehors du périmètre de protection ci-dessus défini (de la région de Gafsa), le Gouvernement Tunisien s'engage à n'en accorder la Concession qu'après avoir appelé en concurrence avec les demandeurs les titulaires de la présente Concession."

En Français, cela veut dire que d'un trait de plume sont biffés, supprimés, escamotés, les droits de nos compatriotes habitant la Tunisie qui se sont occupés de recherches de carrières, cela veut dire que ces chercheurs intelligents, que ces travailleurs infatigables sont lésés au profit de financiers qui n'ont jamais mis les pieds en Tunisie, mais qui, désormais, en vertu de cet Article 13, n'auront qu'à se présenter, à l'heure précise où ceux qui ont peiné pour découvrir des gisements en solliciteront l'exploitation, pour, moyennant une surenchère insignifiante, les déposséder du fruit de leur labeur; n'y a-t-il pas là, comme en Algérie, de quoi soulever l'opinion publique et attirer l'attention du Parlement?

Il n'entre, certes, pas dans notre esprit la pensée d'établir entre l'affaire de Tebessa et celle de Gafsa le moindre rapprochement, quant aux personnes du moins; nous voudrions même que la dissemblance s'étendit jusqu'aux conséquences qu'elles auront l'une et l'autre, mais la vérité nous oblige à dire qu'il y a eu faute lourde en Tunisie aussi bien qu'en Algérie, et que, si l'Administration de la Colonie voisine a pêché gravement, soit en manquant de prévoyance, soit en fermant les yeux sur les tripotages qui se faisaient sous son couvert, l'Administration Tunisienne à, de son côté, compromis, peut-être à jamais, les intérêts de notre agriculture et commis en outre un déni de justice flagrant qui engage gravement sa responsabilité.

Pour bien comprendre ce qui va suivre, il n'est pas inutile de jeter un coup d'œil sur l'état de la question phosphatière en Algérie et en Tunisie, il y a seulement deux mois; il serait, en effet, injuste que les quelques hommes qui, en Tunisie, viennent de consacrer à la recherche et à la découverte de gisements importants de longs mois, voire des années, au cours desquels ils ont exposé leur santé en se livrant à un travail opiniâtre et pénible, fussent obligés de supporter, si peu que ce fût, le poids du discrédit qui semble peser, avec raison, depuis l'interpellation Pauliat, sur quelques phosphatiers Algériens.

Chez nos voisins, la question a suivi trois phases bien distinctes: la période de recherches, puis l'obtention des Concessions, obtention entachée de fraude, enfin, l'aliénation entre des mains étrangères du privilège obtenu.

La période des recherches s'ouvre en 1890; l'existence de gisements, soupçonnée et signalée en passant par un ingénieur qui donna, ce jour-là, la preuve d'une remarquable

perspicacité, ne tarda pas à être vérifiée et confirmée par un sous-ordre qui garda pour lui les avantages d'une découverte où sa part personnelle était bien réduite; cette découverte en amena d'autres et bientôt les demandes de Concessions affluèrent à la Préfecture de Constantine. Ce fut alors que se passèrent les faites répréhensibles signalés par M. Pauliat et non démentis; des Concessions furent accordées à des bénéficiaires dont l'intervention servait uniquement à masquer des personnalités qui n'osaient s'affirmer au grand jour; et, en dernière analyse, il fut reconnu que l'exploitation des richesses incalculables contenues dans les gisements de Tebessa était passée à des maisons Anglaises.

On ne saurait donc éprouver—toute exception éventuelle mise à part—un grand intérêt pour ceux qui, en Algérie, ont mis les premiers la main sur les trésors que cette terre recélait; ce n'est pas dans leur rang que se trouve l'auteur réel de la découverte, la manière, enfin, dont ils ont obtenu leur privilège et surtout l'usage qu'ils en ont fait ne peuvent que leur aliéner la sympathie publique.

Les choses se passèrent tout autrement en Tunisie.

Depuis la révélation, faite en 1885, par M. Thomas, géologue en mission, de l'existence d'importants gisements de phosphates dans la région de Gafsa, de nombreuses recherches ont été opérées, par de simples particuliers, sur toute l'étendue de la Régence; leurs efforts personnels ont permis de relever dans la région nord, notamment, d'autres placers aussi riches que ceux du sud, plus facilement exploitables, peut-être, et dont l'emplacement n'était pas même soupçonné par nos ingénieurs.

Grâce à l'initiative privée de ces chercheurs infatigables, initiative que le Gouvernement, nous le démontrons, avait, avec raison, encouragée, des richesses ignorées ont été véritablement exhumées, et, à l'heure actuelle, la mise en valeur raisonnée et judicieuse de ces ressources inépuisables pourrait donner à l'agriculture Tunisienne un essor qui assurerait à l'ancienne Byzacène une prospérité plus grande encore que celle qui lui est attribuée par l'histoire des temps passés. Comme l'a rappelé, en effet, M. Pauliat, on a employé une comparaison fort juste, on a dit "que le phosphate de chaux était de la houille blanche, qu'il était pour l'agriculture ce que le charbon est pour l'industrie et que, dans les pays où les phosphates de chaux étaient abondants et à bon marché, l'agriculture était aussi sûre de prospérer et de prédominer que l'industrie prospère et prédomine dans les pays où la houille est sur place et peut être achetée dans de bonnes conditions."

Nous serions donc, en Tunisie, sur le point de saisir la fortune, et l'agriculture, cette mère nourricière, cette cause première de toute abondance, serait donc bientôt en mesure de rémunérer largement ceux qui se consacrent à elle, si le Gouvernement n'avait, en quelque sorte, fait faillite à ses engagements vis-à-vis de ceux qu'il avait lancés en avant, si, aveuglé, pour ainsi dire, par le brillant mirage d'une ligne à construire sans bourse déliée, il n'avait aliéné entre les mains d'une Société unique toutes les richesses présentes et à venir de la Tunisie, et si la création d'une Compagnie puissante, monopolisant en réalité toute notre industrie phosphatière, ne constituait pour plus tard un réel danger.

Voilà pourtant, dans toute son étendue, le mal que causera infailliblement un Article, un seul, inséré, on ne sait ni comment ni pourquoi, dans cette Convention du 25 Juin dont nous parlions au début du présent travail. C'est ainsi que d'une combinaison bonne en elle-même, si on s'était borné à concéder les phosphates de Gafsa et d'autres avantages dans cette région en échange d'une voie ferrée reliant les gisements au port de Sfax, on a fait un instrument d'oppression et de ruine pour des travailleurs intéressants qui escomptaient à bon droit les résultats de leurs études, et on a compromis, en tuant la concurrence, tous les avantages que l'agriculture pouvait attendre des découvertes nouvelles.

Nous avons donc raison de dire que si, en Algérie, l'Administration avait manqué à ses devoirs en laissant s'accomplir, sous ses yeux, le dol et la fraude, l'Administration en Tunisie n'était pas moins répréhensible, car elle a disposé, en faveur d'une Société, si intéressante soit-elle, des résultats d'études qui ne lui appartenaient nullement et dont l'accaparement constitue un véritable déni de justice.

Un abus de pouvoir aussi criant ne saurait être passé sous silence; on pourrait, il est vrai, faire bon marché de quelques intérêts particuliers, si leur ruine pouvait servir au bien général; qu'importent les blessés, voire les tués, dans la bataille de la vie? Mais dans l'affaire qui nous occupe, on l'a compris, il n'en saurait être ainsi, non seulement la combinaison à laquelle s'est rangé le Directeur-Général des Travaux Publics, lèse des droits acquis, mais encore elle est néfaste à d'autres points de vue; et, si nous nous contentons aujourd'hui de donner de l'affaire un aperçu général, c'est dans l'intention de l'examiner en détail dans de prochains articles.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 19.)

(No. 60. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, August 5, 1895.

AS the limit within which the Italian Treaty with Tunis must be denounced, or renewed, *ipso facto* of its not having been denounced, draws near—it is now less than six weeks—the alarm of its enemies lest that time should elapse without that denunciation is becoming more and more acute, specially as, M. Hanotaux being away from Paris, it is supposed possible that the French Foreign Office, not attaching the importance to the subject that is given to it here, may allow that period to lapse.

This feeling will account for the publication in large type in the "Dépêche" of the inclosed article, taken from the "Revue du Commerce Extérieur," a paper published in France presumably, though this article is apparently inspired from Tunis, and, as it is not too much to suppose that it is one in which the Residency may have had some hand.

Perhaps the most noticeable feature in this article is that, while claim is made to all the rights of absolute sovereignty, just as if Tunis were an integral part of France, it is suggested that *au besoin* the Bey of Tunis should himself denounce the Treaty, and thereby press the French yoke still closer round his neck and that of his country—thus illustrating the character of the so-called protection of this country.

I have, &c.

(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

Inclosure in No. 50.

Extract from the "Dépêche Tunisienne" of August 14, 1895.

LE TRAITÉ ITALO-TUNISIEN.—Malgré les sacrifices faits par la France en Tunisie, malgré les immenses services rendus au pays par notre Administration, nous ne sommes pas libres en Tunisie.

En vain l'Europe nous a-t-elle autorisés à disposer du sort de la Régence, en vain avons-nous enrichi la population Tunisienne en lui assurant les avantages d'une Administration régulière. Une autorité étrangère fonctionne encore dans la Régence. Elle a créé des institutions, des associations qui forment un État dans l'État, n'agissent qu'à leur gré et se soustraient à l'empire des Lois et des Règlements, qu'ils émanent du Bey ou de l'Administration Française.

Nous protégeons la Tunisie, nous garantissons le paiement de sa Dette Publique, nous accordons à ses produits un traitement douanier privilégié. Qu'importe! nous n'avons pas le droit de faire pénétrer nos marchandises en Tunisie, sans acquitter des droits d'importation égaux à ceux que paient les étrangers.

Que les Italiens résident, commercer, possèdent en Tunisie, y exercent tous les droits civils compatibles avec leur qualité d'étrangers, nous aurions mauvaise grâce à nous en fâcher. Ce sont des droits naturels, dont l'exercice leur est aussi bien acquis qu'en France.

Ils peuvent en jouir dans ce prolongement de l'Algérie Française.

Mais que les citoyens Italiens jouissent du droit de pêche, dans les eaux Tunisiennes, même en principe; qu'ils exercent le commerce de cabotage et d'escale, qui nous est refusé sur leur littoral; que leurs propriétés foncières acquittent moins d'impôts que celles des Tunisiens ou des Français; que leurs importations jouissent du traitement de la nation la plus favorisée—refusé à nos produits en Italie—voilà ce qui est inadmissible.

Ces divers privilèges ont donné aux 25,000 Italiens campés dans la Régence une cohésion et une influence que la France aurait pu supporter, à l'époque où la Triple Alliance était inconnue. Au point de vue économique, les avantages exceptionnels conférés à l'importation Tunisienne sur les marchés Français légitiment nos aspirations à un traitement réciproque. L'Union Douanière de la France et de la Tunisie, à moitié réalisée aux dépens de nos finances et de nos producteurs, doit être complétée au delà de la Méditerranée.

Mais rien n'est possible aussi longtemps que la Tunisie restera liée vis-à-vis de l'Italie par le Traité aussi politique que commercial du 8 Septembre, 1868.

Heureusement ce Traité n'est pas perpétuel. L'Article XXV limite sa durée à vingt-huit ans, à partir de l'échange des ratifications, qui est sûrement antérieur au 8 Décembre, 1868.

Le 8 Décembre, 1896, au plus tard, la France et la Tunisie seront donc délivrées de ces entraves.

Une revision était possible avant l'expiration de chaque septième année, c'est-à-dire en 1875, en 1882, et en 1889. Que nous n'ayons pas fait usage de cette faculté en 1882, cela est explicable, quoique ce fut peut-être une faute. En 1889, la vigilance gouvernementale est certainement restée en défaut.

Mais ce qui serait inadmissible ce serait que le Gouvernement actuel, que M. Ribot, Président du Conseil, que M. Hanotaux, Ministre des Affaires Étrangères, laissassent passer, sans agir, la date de dénonciation du Traité de 1868, c'est-à-dire qu'ils renoncassent à l'affranchissement de la Tunisie de toute ingérence politique, économique, et administrative dans les affaires de la quatrième province de notre Afrique.

D'après l'Article XXV, "le présent Traité restera en vigueur pendant vingt-huit ans, à partir de l'échange des ratifications. Mais si, douze mois avant ce terme, il n'est pas dénoncé par une des Parties Contractantes, il est considéré comme renouvelé pour une période semblable."

Ainsi, si le Résident-Général de France, Ministre des Affaires Étrangères de la Régence de Tunis, si le Bey lui-même au besoin . . . et peut-être est-ce le seul moyen efficace, ne dénonce pas dans un délai de six semaines environ le Traité du 20 Djoumadiet-Aoual, 1285, l'Italie restera pendant vingt-huit ans Puissance autonome à quelques heures de la Sicile. Elle aura 25,000, 50,000, peut-être 100,000 nationaux serrés autour de leur Consul-Général, organisés en Sociétés de Secours Mutuels, de Gymnastique, ou d'Instruction Militaire,* avec un chemin de fer pour point d'appui ou pour ligne de retrait sur le littoral, les bâtiments des gares pour casernes, les équipages de pêcheurs côtiers pour renforts.

La dénonciation du Traité Italo-Tunisien est une mesure indispensable. La politique l'exige; les intérêts du commerce Français et de la colonisation nationale indissolublement liés à l'assimilation douanière de la France et de la Tunisie la rendent tout aussi nécessaire.

M. Hanotaux, qui a déjà fait preuve de décision et d'habileté, ne commettra pas une faute impardonnable. Il ne suivra pas les conseils de prudence ou plutôt d'imprudance qui doivent déjà lui être prodigués, il ne se laissera pas abuser par les combinaisons illusoires à l'aide desquelles les intéressés cherchent sans doute à le circonvenir ou à endormir sa vigilance.

Du reste, le Gouvernement de la Régence peut accorder à l'Italie, par une Convention nouvelle, absolument distincte de l'ancienne, tous les droits légitimes accordés en France aux étrangers en général. Les Italiens doivent jouir, même en Tunisie, des avantages du droit commun. Mais il serait plus qu'imprudent de leur concéder aucun avantage particulier, fût-ce même le traitement commercial de la nation la plus favorisée.

Nous reproduisons ci-dessous le texte ou une analyse de tous les Articles du Traité Italo-Tunisien de 1868. Ils sont si peu connus en France qu'une reproduction nous a paru indispensable.†

"Article I^{er}. Tous les droits, privilèges, et immunités, qui ont été conférés aux Représentants, aux citoyens, et aux navires Italiens en vertu des usages et des Traités existants entre le Royaume de Tunis et les États qui composent aujourd'hui le Royaume d'Italie, sont confirmés et appliqués à toute l'Italie, à l'exception des clauses qui ne s'accorderaient pas avec aucun des Articles de la présente Convention. Il est en outre expressément entendu que tous les droits, privilèges, et immunités que le Royaume de Tunis accorde à présent et pourrait à l'avenir accorder, à quelque titre que ce soit, aux citoyens, aux navires, et au commerce de n'importe quelle autre Puissance étrangère seront considérés comme accordés, *ipso facto*, aux Représentants, aux citoyens, aux navires, au commerce, et à la navigation du Royaume d'Italie.

* "Article XVIII. Les citoyens de chacune des Parties Contractantes pourront librement établir dans les États de l'autre partie des Sociétés Commerciales, Industrielles, et de Banque, des Associations mutuelles ou toute autre Association, &c."

† Le Traité ne figure pas dans le Recueil des Traités de M. de Clercq. Notre Président de la Chambre de Commerce Française de Tunis a bien voulu nous en communiquer un texte. En Italie, il nous a été impossible—et pour cause—de l'obtenir. Peut-être serait-il bon de collationner ce texte avec la Minute officielle, déposée dans les archives Beylicales. Il nous semble qu'il n'est pas identique au texte officiel Italien que nous avons jadis étudié.

"Par contre, les sujets et les navires Tunisiens, en Italie, continueront de jouir des droits qui leur auront été accordés par les Traités antérieurs et seront admis à la jouissance des droits et faveurs qui sont et seront accordés à toute autre Puissance étrangère.

"L'Article II stipule la complète et entière liberté de commerce, de relâche, de navigation avec assimilation des citoyens et des navires Italiens à ceux des nations étrangères les plus privilégiées et des ressortissants de la Régence pour les droits de tonnage, de phares, de port, de pilotage, et de quarantaine et autres.

"Même assimilation en ce qui concerne le commerce d'échelles et de cabotage, en vertu de l'Article III. L'Article IV est dénué d'intérêt.

"Les Articles V, VI, VII, et VIII ne sont relatifs qu'à l'exercice des droits naturels de résidence et de commerce dans tous les pays civilisés. Mais certains paragraphes de l'Article IX limitent dans une mesure inadmissible la liberté d'action du Souverain. Ainsi, le Gouvernement Beylical s'engage à ne pas augmenter vis-à-vis de l'Italie les droits de Douane actuels pour l'importation et les droits maritimes. Sa liberté de tarification est ainsi annulée au profit de l'Italie. En même temps, il lui est interdit d'accorder aux provenances Françaises un traitement plus avantageux, s'il n'était pas applicable simultanément aux marchandises Italiennes. Il s'est également lié en ce qui concerne l'établissement de monopoles ou de prohibitions d'importation ou d'exportation, excepté pour les armes, les monnaies, le tabac, et les céréales.

"D'après l'Article XII, la valeur moyenne des articles d'importation et d'exportation doivent être établis tous les sept ans par des Commissaires nommés par les deux Parties Contractantes.

"Cette détermination a pour but de fixer le montant réel des droits de douane qui sont perçus *ad valorem*.

"La revision devait avoir lieu au cours des années 1875, 1882, 1889, et 1896, c'est-à-dire pendant chaque septième année postérieure à la conclusion du Traité.

"D'après l'Article XIII, les citoyens Italiens conservent leur nationalité selon les lois de leur pays et seront considérés comme tels, même s'ils deviennent fonctionnaires Tunisiens."

Le second paragraphe de l'Article XIV a une portée politique indéniable. Il est ainsi conçu :—

"Aucun changement n'aura lieu, en ce qui concerne la protection exercée par le Consul-Général d'Italie à Tunis sur ses propres nationaux, sur les droits, immunités, ou privilèges dont jouiraient ceux-ci, par les Traités, Lois, et coutumes."

C'est en vertu de cette clause que les Italiens, se déclarant protégés par les coutumes, ont élevé la prétention d'élever en Tunisie des établissements scolaires nationaux dont ils exigent l'entière autonomie. Ils ont créé des écoles purement Italiennes qu'ils prétendent soustraire à l'inspection des autorités Françaises ou Tuniso-Françaises.

En un mot, l'Italie revendique le maintien des Capitulations, régime admissible à l'époque où la Régence était indépendante, insupportable pour elle et pour la France, Puissance Protectrice, depuis que l'Administration Tunisienne fonctionne avec autant de perfection qu'une Administration Européenne.

L'Article XV, qui accorde aux citoyens Italiens le droit d'établir des manufactures, contient aussi des dispositions privilégiées. Un paragraphe, le second de cet Article, est même dénué de sens; de plus, en aucun cas, le Gouvernement de la Régence n'a le droit de fermer les fabriques Italiennes, dont les possesseurs contreviendraient aux règlements d'hygiène et de police.

Quant au paragraphe inintelligible, nous croyons qu'il a servi de prétexte au Consulat d'Italie pour refuser aux fonctionnaires Français le droit de visiter les écoles Italiennes.

L'Article XVII concède aux Italiens le droit de pêche, contrairement à la législation Française et aussi aux privilèges spéciaux conférés à la France par un Traité antérieur à 1841.

D'après l'Article XIX, le droit d'association est conféré aux sujets Italiens.

Selon l'Article XXI, la propriété mobilière et immobilière des Italiens est inviolable, ce qui est juste. Mais l'Article XXII limite à 40 piastres, soit 2 fr. 40 c. environ par 10 hectares, le montant de l'impôt foncier "pour chaque meschia (de 10 hectares) labourée ou non." L'autorité Beylicale perd ainsi l'exercice libre de l'établissement de l'impôt. En vertu de cet Article, les propriétaires de terrains bâtis ont le droit de n'acquitter que des impôts fonciers dérisoires.

Un autre Article soustrait à la législation locale le règlement des donations et des

successions d'immeubles, autre atteinte à l'exercice des droits de souveraineté Franco-Italienne.

En un mot, divers Articles de ce Traité confèrent à l'Italie et aux Italiens des privilèges commerciaux, politiques, judiciaires, maritimes, et fiscaux inconciliables avec la législation Française et avec toute législation civilisée.

No. 51.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 19.)

(No. 61. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, August 10, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Lordship's despatch No. 5, Confidential, of the 30th ultimo, inclosing a plan on which your Lordship informs me that the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty desire that the rock in the Bizerta Channel should be marked, and stating that they would be glad to learn the depth of water now over the rock, and to receive any further information which may enable them to bring their plan up to date.

I will do my best to carry out their Lordships' wishes, but I fear that, in view of the extreme jealousy of the French authorities with reference to anything concerning Bizerta, and especially of the absence at this moment on sick leave of the Honourable Terence Bourke, Her Majesty's Consular Agent, it may be exceedingly difficult to get the information they require.

The rock in question is, however, I hear, being rapidly removed, so that, should I fail in this endeavour, it will not be of permanent importance.

I have, &c.

(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 52.

Mr. Edwardes to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 19.)

(No. 140.)

My Lord,

Rome, August 14, 1895.

THE question of the denunciation by Tunis of the Italo-Tunisian Treaty of 1868 is occupying the serious attention of the Italian Government. In accordance with Article XXV, this Treaty must be denounced by one of the Contracting Parties twelve months before its expiration, the date of which is the 29th September, 1896.

In the course of a conversation I had to-day with M. Maissa he told me that the Italian Government had no doubt but that they would receive, within the prescribed time, notice of the denunciation, and that communications on the subject had passed between the Foreign Office and the Italian Embassy in London.

From M. Maissa's remarks I gathered that fears were entertained that the lapse of this Treaty would place Italian trade with Tunis at a great disadvantage to that of France, but it is evident that, as yet, no course of policy has been decided on by the Italian Government in the event of the notification of the denunciation being made to them.

I have the honour to inclose herein a paragraph which has appeared in the "Italie" on this subject, as well as a copy and translation of an article taken from the "Tribuna," which comments on the remarks which have appeared in some French papers.

I have, &c.

(Signed) H. G. EDWARDES.

Inclosure 1 in No. 52.

Extract from "L'Italie" of August 14, 1895.

LE TRAITÉ ITALO-TUNISIEN.—Nous avons déjà dit que notre Gouvernement s'abstiendra de toute démarche officielle à propos du Traité Italo-Tunisien, tant que ce Traité n'est pas officiellement dénoncé. Dans tous les cas, si des négociations doivent avoir lieu, ce qui n'est que trop probable, elles ne peuvent commencer qu'après la dénonciation.

Pour le moment, ce qu'il y a de mieux à faire, c'est d'attendre la fin du mois de Septembre et la décision du Cabinet Français.

Avouons qu'une entente n'est pas facile, mais il nous revient de bonne source que, même à Paris, on désire trouver une base possible pour s'entendre.

Cette affaire du Traité Italo-Tunisien pourrait bien fournir l'occasion pour résoudre nombre de questions du même genre ouvertes depuis long-temps entre les deux nations, et dont la solution intéresse au même degré autant la France que l'Italie.

Inclosure 2 in No. 52.

Extract from the "Tribuna" of August 13, 1895.

(Translation.)

TELEGRAM from Paris, 12th August:—

"The 'Matin' calls upon France to denounce the Italo-Tunisian Commercial Treaty before it is renewed for twenty-eight years.

"The economic development of Tunis and the future of the Protectorate demand it because that Treaty paralyzes the action of France politically and financially.

"The 'Matin' enumerates the privileges enjoyed by Italy under the Treaty of 1868, while France, which has spent so many millions, and still yearly spends 15 millions, remains a foreign Power in Tunis.

"The 'Matin' concludes by saying: 'Break the Commercial Treaty between Italy and Tunis, and the latter will enter into exclusive commercial relations with France which will indemnify her for her sacrifices in that country.'

Before the "Matin" spoke, M. Paul Leroy-Beaulieu had written in the same sense in the "Économiste Français." He had pointed out that the Italian Treaty was the chief obstacle to a close Customs Union between France and Tunis, and hampered French action in that country.

Both from a political and from an economic point of view he argued the Treaty should be denounced.

He declares that the equal treatment of French and Italian goods in the Regency was intolerable, and that it was necessary to put a stop to this equality of treatment, as Tunis had become a real dependency of France, free of servitudes, and it was also essential that France should strengthen her position on the Mediterranean, as well as in Central Africa.

Those who read this will remark that, according to interested writers, Tunis is not yet a real dependency of France. She is still under servitudes. If, by the simple denouncing of a Commercial Treaty, her condition can be changed, is that not an alteration of the *status quo* in the Mediterranean which all have agreed to respect?

This point is sufficiently interesting to merit examination and study. But we do not want the matter discussed in Paris, where they are inclined to go to far-fetched arguments when they can do us harm, and where Treaties which impose limitations upon the French are declared to be of no importance.

We want the matter discussed in Rome, London, Berlin, Vienna, where the relaxation of these limitations and the repudiation of engagements may be considered a bad precedent, for there is the proverb, "Hodie mihi, cras tibi."

They talk of the impossibility of tolerating an equality of treatment for Italian and French goods. But why is this question limited to Italian goods? Putting aside England, who enjoys a Treaty, why do they not also talk of German, Austrian, Dutch, Spanish, Portuguese goods?

The products of these countries are placed on an equality with those of France, and be it observed by those opposed to us, or more particularly by those who wish to study the question, that Germany, Austria-Hungary, Holland, Spain, and Portugal

have no stipulations of any kind which have been denounced, or which will be denounced.

The French seem to forget the existence of what are known as the Capitulations, stipulations agreed to in the distant past to regulate the position of Europeans in the Levant, and which, so far as they relate to the Regency, were solemnly reconsecrated by the fundamental Pact of 1857.

Italy enjoys the advantages granted by the Capitulations, which were confirmed by the fundamental Pact of 1857. Other nations have not yet had occasion to raise this question, but Italy has, and she has specially drawn the attention of France to her rights and international position in Tunis. Yet see what the "Matin" and M. Beaulieu are saying.

When, in 1884, we consented, to please our neighbours, who now treat us with so much harshness, to suspend, not the Capitulations, but simply Consular jurisdiction which existed under them, we insisted that, in the Protocol which dealt with the matter, apart from various other reserves (many of which have been violated), the following two should be clearly affirmed:—

1. That the "suspension" should be merely temporary, as it was granted merely as an experiment.

2. That, in granting this, Italy formally reserved to herself all the other privileges and concessions which she enjoyed under the Capitulations.

Now anything may happen in this world, the most solemn international obligations, Treaties and Conventions may be torn up and thrown into one's face. But what cannot happen is that those who receive the injury should forget that they also possess something which they can hurl in the faces of their assailants.

What would they say in France if Italy were to declare the "experiment" over and not satisfactory, and denounced in consequence the Protocol of 1884, relative to Consular jurisdiction, and demanded a return to the *status quo ante*, as she has a right to do?

This demand may lead the French to hesitate, and, under the circumstances, the demand cannot be considered unreasonable. In it we will find a defence for our most sacred rights, and it would be a good thing if our statesmen were to let the possibility of this demand being made be heard there, from whence a disturbance of our sacred rights on the shores of the Mediterranean may come.

No. 53.

Mr. Howard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 19.)

(No. 268.)

My Lord,

Paris, August 18, 1895.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 265 of the 14th instant, I have the honour to acquaint your Lordship that it is announced in all the newspapers that M. Hanotaux yesterday informed the Council of Ministers that a note denouncing the Italian Treaty with Tunis of 1868 had been delivered by the French Chargé d'Affaires at Rome to the Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs in that capital.

I have, &c.

(Signed) HENRY HOWARD.

No. 54.

Mr. Edwardes to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 20.)

(No. 142.)

My Lord,

Rome, August 20, 1895.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 140 of the 14th instant, I have the honour to inform your Lordship that Signor Maissa, Chief Director of the Italian Foreign Office, told me yesterday that the Italian Government had now received from the French Embassy here the formal notification that the Government of the Bey of Tunis had the intention of denouncing the Italo-Tunisian Treaty on the 29th September next, the date by which the denunciation must be made if the Treaty is not to be renewed.

I have, &c.

(Signed) H. G. EDWARDES.

No. 55.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 24.)

(No. 66.)

My Lord,

Tunis, August 18, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that I have just received word from the Italian Agent and Consul-General that late last evening he received a note from the French Délégué denouncing, on behalf of the Beylical Government, the Italo-Tunisian Treaty of 1868.

I have, &c.

(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 56.

The Marquess of Salisbury to Mr. Edwardes.

(No. 21. Commercial. Confidential.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, August 24, 1895.

THE Italian Ambassador informed me on the 17th instant that the French Chargé d'Affaires at Rome had, on behalf of the Bey of Tunis, denounced the Treaty of Commerce between Italy and Tunis. His Excellency asked for an assurance that Her Majesty's Government would not give up the British Treaty with Tunis, and particularly that Great Britain would maintain the most-favoured-nation clause.

General Ferrero has been informed, in reply, that Her Majesty's Government would be unable to refuse to discuss proposals for the revision of the British Treaty, as this was expressly provided for in Article XL.

Her Majesty's Government would be ready to communicate to the Italian Government any proposals that may be made, and to inform them of any changes which Great Britain might be disposed to make in the Treaty.

His Excellency was also informed that I had no present intention of altering the most-favoured-nation clause, and thought it most improbable that any British Government would do so.

I am, &c.

(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 57.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received September 4.)

(No. 62. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, August 11, 1895.

IN the course of a conversation which I held last night with the Italian Agent and Consul-General, he told me that it was generally considered that the port of Bizerta was likely to prove a complete failure, both commercially and from a naval point of view, specially in consequence of the danger of the current, and that, consequently, the very large sums already spent there may be considered as practically thrown away.

As Signor Macchiavelli has very exceptional means of information, I have thought it advisable to repeat to your Lordship this confirmation of the views which I have had the honour of expressing in former despatches.

Signor Macchiavelli further told me that the large sums spent on the port here have been to a great extent wasted. He added that lately the French authorities had consulted an eminent Italian engineer, who had told him that to be of any use they must spend at least 20,000,000* more, and that that would be only the first instalment.

I have, &c.

(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

* *Qy. francs.*

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received September 4.)

(No. 63. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, August 11, 1895.

DURING the conversation to which I have had the honour of alluding in my immediately preceding despatch, the Italian Agent and Consul-General informed me that he had heard that the question of the denunciation of their Treaty was being actively discussed with the view of certain modifications being proposed. He said that these discussions were kept very secret, but that he had himself little doubt that the Treaty would be denounced.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received September 4.)

(No. 65. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, August 12, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that I have heard that some French ships of war have lately paid a visit to the Gulf of Bon Grara, the bay in the south of Tunis, the entrance to which is so admirably protected by the Island of Djerba. They are reported to have occupied themselves in taking soundings, &c.

M. Riffault, the French Chargé d'Affaires, also took a trip there lately in the "Hirondelle," the dispatch-boat attached to the Residency.

These visits may perhaps account for, or at least give colour to, the prevalent idea that the French idea of making a naval port there, in the extreme south of the Regency—Bizerta being in the extreme north—may be taking shape, and, should the latter prove the failure which now seems possible, they may perhaps be even more anxious to have a port with the great natural advantage that Bon Grara would seem to offer.

It is suggested that its comparative nearness to the mouth of the Nile may also be a factor which may influence them in their decision on this point, while if ever the so-much-talked-of scheme of a railroad to and beyond Ghadames come to anything, this gulf would be a far better Mediterranean terminus than Gabes, even if the enormous expense of constructing an artificial harbour were incurred there, where the natural port is nothing but an exposed roadstead.

Mr. Drummond-Hay reported on this matter in his despatch No. 41 of the 1st September, 1891; and in his No. 35 of the 6th June, 1892, referred to the expropriation by the Tunisian Government of 123 hectares of land for the maritime establishment of the port.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received September 28.)

(No. 67.)

My Lord,

Tunis, September 3, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to inclose an article published in the "Dépêche Tunisienne," which is interesting, from a strategical point of view, specially when calling attention to the fact of the change in the railway gauge, which is at present made at Hamman-el-Lif, about 10 miles from Tunis, but which is intended to be effected at Tunis itself, being likely to cause difficulties in the possible event of the necessity of moving troops rapidly to the south of the Regency from the north or from Algeria.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

Extract from the "Dépêche Tunisienne" of August 31, 1895.

TUNIS—MENZEL-BOU-ZELFA.—TUNIS—HAMMAMET—NABEUL.

V.

Le Nouveau Réseau au Point de Vue stratégique.

POUR qui consulte une carte et surtout parcourt le pays, l'adoption de la voie d'un mètre à partir de Tunis pour prolonger le réseau qui prend naissance à Alger et qui doit servir, le cas échéant, au XIX^e Corps d'Armée venant renforcer la Division de Tunisie, semble difficile à admettre; cette question a, du reste, fait l'objet de nombreuses discussions à la Conférence Consultative, notamment à la session extraordinaire de Juillet 1892, où plusieurs membres ont soutenu, non sans logique, qu'il fallait continuer le même écartement de voie jusqu'à Hammamet.

La Presqu'île du Cap Bon.

En effet, quel que soit le plan de défense de la Tunisie, plan que naturellement nous ignorons, une chose saute aux yeux, c'est que la partie faible du système est la Presqu'île du Cap Bon, dont la baie de Kelibia, très abordable, est à quelques tours d'hélice de l'Ile de Pantellaria, laquelle est, elle-même, à trois ou quatre heures de la Sicile.

Il semble que notre presqu'île soit une sorte de bras tendu, à travers la mer, vers l'Italie, pour l'inviter à descendre sur nos côtes comme le fit jadis Régulus, en 256. Pays fertile, couvert de massifs montagneux, également bons pour la défense et pour l'offensive, le Cap Bon tentera certainement, à titre de base d'opération, l'État-Major Italien, qui voudra probablement y envoyer quelques divisions de la Sicile et du sud de l'Italie que la longueur du transport ne lui permettrait pas de diriger vers le Pô et les Alpes en temps utile.

C'est dans l'espoir de pouvoir faire fête un jour à ses compatriotes que vit la nombreuse colonie, exclusivement Italienne, de Kelibia, dont les membres, depuis longtemps fixés dans le pays, seront pour les colonnes Italiennes d'excellents guides. Une fois établies dans la presqu'île, ces colonnes seront bien difficiles à déloger. C'est pourquoi on eût aimé à avoir sous la main, dès la prime nouvelle de leur débarquement, une quantité raisonnable de wagons empruntés au réseau central pour en jeter, sans transbordement, tout le contenu à l'entrée de la région menacée. Pour la même raison, le Golfe d'Hammamet étant particulièrement propre à un débarquement, il eût été désirable que nos troupes, venant non seulement de Tunis mais encore d'Algérie, pussent s'y porter rapidement et, avec elles, le matériel nécessaire.

En cas de Guerre avec l'Italie.

Actuellement nous aurons la guerre avec l'Italie—ce qu'à Dieu ne plaise—que nous nous trouverions dans la nécessité de faire tous les transbordements à Hammamel-Lif, où les hangars, les quais et autres installations font défaut. Supposons la transformation de la gare de Tunis achevée—c'est un gros morceau à exécuter—l'État-Major Français sera toujours acculé à cette nécessité de borner ses envois de troupes aux quelques wagons attribués à la voie étroite. Nous ne parlons pas de la capacité de ces wagons, car ils auront, conformément à la Circulaire du Ministre de la Guerre du 10 Novembre, 1887, une largeur qui dépassera 2 mètres et seront par conséquent utilisables pour les transports stratégiques; mais le nombre, nous l'avons vu, en est fort restreint. On sera donc obligé probablement de débarquer le gros de nos forces à Tunis et de les envoyer par étapes au point de contact, d'où une perte de temps considérable, qui se traduira aussi par une perte d'hommes, l'effort que l'on sera obligé de faire pour déloger l'ennemi devant être plus pénible.

Voie Large et Voie Étroite, la Carte à Payer.

Il semble que le Gouvernement Français, qui, en qualité de protecteur, a assumé la responsabilité de la défense de la Tunisie, n'aurait pas dû laisser se consommer ce qui paraît être une faute. En y regardant de plus près pourtant, on voit que le prolongement de la ligne à voie normale sur Hammamet entraînait l'écartement de 1.44 m. : (1) sur l'embranchement Fondouk-Djedid-Menzel puis Kelibia; (2) sur la ligne Fondouk-Djedid-Grombalia-Bou-Rokba-Enfidaville-Sousse; on suppose d'ici la carte à payer!

L'état de nos finances ne nous permettait pas ce luxe, il eût peut-être été à souhaiter que la Métropole, qui a dans la Tunisie un des plus beaux fleurons de son Empire Colonial, payât, sous forme de quote-part, la différence de prix qui existe entre l'application de la voie large et celle de la voie étroite sur Hammamet et le Cap Bon.

Cette différence n'était pas au surplus bien considérable; à voie large le kilomètre devait coûter environ 62,000 fr., tel qu'il est aujourd'hui il coûtera 50,000 fr.

En basant les calculs sur ce qui est actuellement construit ou près de l'être, on a, de Tunis à Nabeul, 58 kilom. 800 + 13 kilom. 500 pour l'embranchement de Menzel, au total 72 kilom.; en arrondissant les chiffres, cette partie de notre réseau nous coûtera 3,800,000 fr.; à voie large il nous eût coûté dans les 4,500,000 fr., c'est-à-dire 700,000 fr. de plus. L'avenir démontrera si la France n'aurait pas mieux fait de nous faire cet apport.

La question, par exemple, se complique d'une singulière façon si on raisonne sur les tracés actuels adoptés—on sait avec quelle peine!—Faire la voie large de Tunis à Nabeul, c'eût été parfait, mais devait-on la continuer jusqu'à Sousse par l'Enfida ou faire commencer la voie étroite à Bir-Bou-Rokba, c'est-à-dire au point où la ligne de Sousse se soude à celle de Tunis?

D'un côté se dresse la question d'argent, de l'autre, l'obligation de transborder également les transports stratégiques allant sur Sousse.

Tout bien considéré, étant donné qu'il aurait fallu changer des tracés depuis longtemps débattus ou continuer le sacrifice pendant les 90 kilom. qui séparent Bir-Bou-Rokba de la capitale du Sahel, on a renoncé au bénéfice de la voie normale ininterrompue, et l'autorité militaire s'est résignée en trouvant dans Tunis à la fois le terminus du réseau à 1.44 m. et la tête de ligne de celui à 1 mètre, ce qui simplifie ses graphiques.

La Surveillance de la Voie.

Il nous reste à parler des craintes que nous avons vu exprimer devant nous touchant la sécurité de la voie qui longe la mer à peu de distance. A ce point de vue spécial on conviendra que le gabarit importe peu. Quant aux menaces dont elle peut être l'objet, nous les craignons moins du côté de la mer que de l'intérieur même du pays.

Nous nous expliquons: sans doute il sera toujours possible, avec la portée des pièces actuelles, à un cuirassé d'envoyer quelques projectiles, mais nous doutons fort que la marine Italienne perde ses obus à une besogne aussi aléatoire et que le voisinage de la batterie de Rhadès rendrait par surcroît difficile à mener à bien. Nous ne craignons pas davantage, et pour des raisons analogues, un débarquement clandestin opéré de nuit par une équipe de destruction, mais nous redoutons plutôt les dégâts que pourraient faire à la voie les nombreux Italiens qui sont fixés dans le Cap Bon et que rendrait certainement très entreprenants une descente de leurs nationaux à Kelibia.

Un fait récent qui s'est passé à Tunis même, indique qu'ils ne sont pas embarrassés pour se procurer des tonnelets de poudre de mine. Sans doute l'absence de travaux d'art de Tunis à Menzel permettra de réparer rapidement le dommage fait à la voie et qui ne pourra jamais être irréparable, nos troupes du génie sont d'une dextérité remarquable à ce genre de sport, mais la perte de temps, pour n'être pas grande, peut porter aux opérations un préjudice grave.

Dans toute la France et principalement dans certaines régions, telles que la Savoie, la Haute-Savoie, le Var, les Bouches-du-Rhône, &c., où la colonie étrangère est très dense, on a dressé le dernier ban de la territoriale à surveiller les voies ferrées et à les mettre à l'abri d'un coup de main, cette organisation nous manque, et pour cause, en Tunisie.

Pour remédier à tout cela nous voudrions voir quelques ouvrages établis à Kelibia,

à Hammamet et quelque part au Khanguet, non pas des forts d'arrêt qui coûtent des millions, mais des installations suffisantes pour empêcher les coups de main et tenir le pays et ses habitants en respect; enfin nous pensons qu'on doit se hâter de pousser jusqu'à Kelibia.

Les Français au Cap Bon en 1702.

Nous ne pouvions quitter, on le comprendra, cette intéressante région du Cap Bon sans dire un mot, quelque délicat que fût, à l'heure actuelle surtout, le sujet traité, des mesures qui nous paraissent absolument nécessaires à sa défense; cette partie de la Régence doit nous tenir d'autant plus à cœur, que dès 1702, c'est la correspondance des Beys de Tunis avec la Cour de France qui nous l'apprend, elle était concession Française.

Un de nos compatriotes, le Sieur Bourguet, avait reçu à perpétuité du Bey et du Divan de Tunis, le poste de la Galipie (Kelibia) comme Échelle Franche, avec la permission d'y bâtir des magasins moyennant 7,000 piastres de redevance annuelle. Les limites de sa concession étaient tout le Cap Bon jusqu'à Sfax.

On voit que le nom Français a des lettres de noblesse déjà vénérables dans le pays, et si la discussion des titres était nécessaire, au moment de la revision de certain Traité, on verrait, pour d'autres contrées encore de la Régence, de quel côté est l'ancienneté des droits.

No. 61.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received September 28.)

(No. 68. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, September 9, 1895.

IN an article published in the "Dépêche Tunisienne," the organ of the Residency, attention is called to the fact that the native troops levied in Tunis have not been employed either in the Tonquin or the Madagascar expedition.

In protesting against this decision, the "Dépêche" uses as an argument the following somewhat singular statement, that England had not hesitated to employ in Egypt troops from India: "dont le Protectorat a servi de modèle au régime politique et militaire appliqué à la Tunisie."

The "Dépêche," however, goes on to console itself with the reflection that, as three battalions of the 4th Tirailleurs and two squadrons of the 4th Spahis, Tunisian troops, will be employed this year in the manœuvres shortly to take place in Algeria, there will be henceforward no reason why they should not take part also in colonial expeditions.

This would seem to be an act of sovereignty rather than of protection, and it is questionable whether it will be one of good policy with reference to the popularity of French rule, for the forced military service is already loathed in the Regency; and, as I had the honour of mentioning in my despatch No. 9 of the 15th March, the dread of the Resident and of his large escort was only just enough, as I believe, to prevent a riot on his announcing its future application to a fresh district, on his journey, on which I accompanied him in the spring, and did not prevent his being actually hooted out of the place where he made the announcement.

I have, &c.

(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 62.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received September 28.)

(No. 69.)

My Lord,

Tunis, September 11, 1895.

IN my despatch No. 54 of the 11th July I had the honour of inclosing a copy of an unofficial note from the French Residency, informing me of the intention of removing M. Camus, the official who had been guilty some years back of the torture of two British subjects, from the post of Secretary to the Commissary of Police here, to which he had recently been appointed; and I have now the honour of stating to

your Lordship that the Residency have informed me that this removal has lately been effected by M. Camus' appointment to a clerkship in the Financial Department at Gafsa, an oasis on the southern border.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 63.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received September 28.)

(No. 70. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, September 13, 1895.

IN my despatch No. 3, Confidential, of the 6th February last, I had the honour of stating that I had been informed that in the event of the denunciation by the Beylical Government of the Italo-Tunisian Treaty, Italy might fall back upon the Capitulations, and, in a conversation which I held with him yesterday, the Italian Agent and Consul-General told me that this course would probably be adopted. M. Macchiavelli added that, moreover, by a clause in the Treaty lately denounced, it was specially laid down that it confirmed those already in force. These, he said, had been concluded between Tunis and Tuscany, the two Sicilies and Sardinia—the two first being inherited by the Kingdom of Italy, while the last was applicable by natural transition to the whole of Italy, when it fell under the sway of the Sardinian House. These Treaties were, he said, in perpetuity, and therefore still remained in force, so that as a matter of fact, with the exception of certain details, the denunciation of the Treaty would leave Italy in the same position with reference to Tunis as that which she had hitherto occupied.

M. Macchiavelli was in high spirits at the news which he had received from his Government of your Lordship's conversation with the Italian Ambassador in London, which was conveyed to me in your Lordship's despatch No. 21, Commercial, Confidential, of the 24th August, to Her Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Rome, a copy of which was inclosed in your Lordship's despatch No. 5, Confidential, Commercial, of the 27th August.

He said that his belief was that, with "his usual légèreté," M. Millet had persuaded his Government that they had only to intimate to Her Majesty's Government their wish that our Treaty should be given up for us to yield at once. Your Lordship may recollect that in my despatch No. 50, Confidential, of the 3rd July, I had the honour of conveying the strong impression in the same sense which M. Millet's tone and manner made on me on the only occasion on which he spoke to me on the subject.

England, he went on to say, having been, as M. Millet expected, thus easily cleared out of the way, the other Powers would naturally follow suit, and Italy being thus left alone, would have to yield. M. Macchiavelli did not attempt to disguise his elation at the course of events having turned out so different to that which M. Millet, as he thinks, believed that they would follow under his direction.

He is somewhat irritated at what he considers to be the unnecessary brusqueness of the manner of communication to him of the denunciation of the Treaty. A messenger from the Residency appeared at the Italian Consulate-General late at night with a packet for which he said he was instructed to demand a receipt. On opening this, M. Macchiavelli found simply the denunciation of the Treaty with a request that the receipt of the note might be acknowledged. This was absolutely the first intimation which he had ever had from the Residency of any such intention being entertained, and he seems to think that, while there was nothing to complain of in the actual wording of the note, the manner of conveying this intimation might perhaps have been more courteous.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 64.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received September 28.)

(No. 71. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, September 13, 1895.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 67 of the 3rd instant, I have the honour to inform your Lordship that in conversation lately with Mr. Profeit, the British Vice-Consul, M. Dobler, the Chef du Cabinet of the Resident, stated, on his incidentally touching upon the question of the Southern Railways and their strategical importance, that according to the present scheme of defence, in view of an attack by a foreign Power, these would be very little considered, as it was intended to abandon absolutely and entirely to its fate the southern part of the Regency, all available resources being concentrated on the defence of the northern part of the Regency as far as Cape Bon and probably Hammamet, where it was possible that a fortress might be constructed, if it was finally decided to include this part in the plan of defence.

He added that in any event the defence would not extend beyond the confines of Zaghuan. All troops in the south would be recalled at once, the only object of their presence being to keep the natives quiet, and in the event of foreign attack they would be treated as a "quantité négligeable." It may, however, be remarked that, in that case, the probability is that these tribes, seeing the French troops withdrawn, would rise as they did in 1881 on the French troops being called back on the signing of the Treaty of Kasr-Said, when the campaign had to be entirely gone through a second time; this possibility is, therefore, all the greater if they see their "protectors" "aux prises" with a foreign army, and they can muster many thousands of hardy horsemen who might harass the rear of the French force to some purpose.

The reason for the abandonment of the south is that it would be impossible to provision an army save from the sea; this difficulty, even at present, during the manœuvres, being very keenly felt.

With a view to the rapid mobilization of troops at any particular spot in the north, there is a system of communication by means of signalling-stations provided with "signes optiques" (optical mirrors, I presume), by which the operators are enabled to communicate with each other with the greatest ease. The central station is situated on Zaghuan, with branches in the south at Kairwan, Sfax, Susa, Gabes, and in the north at Sidi-Bon-Said. This northern branch is to be extended to Ain-Drahm and Algeria. This system is also particularly useful for noting the movements of the native tribes.

Talking about the improvements in artillery, M. Dobler said that the cannon mounted in all the fortresses in Tunis were fitted with a mechanism which guarantees absolute accuracy of fire in the case of stationary guns. This he called a "lupine," which appears to be a mirror arrangement by means of which the aim is taken, and as soon as this has been exactly found, the gun is discharged.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 65.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received September 28.)

(No. 72. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, September 14, 1895.

ON the receipt of the private letter from the British Vice-Consul at Sfax, a copy of which I have the honour to inclose, with reference to a report as to the extension by the French of the Tunisian telegraph line to Ghadames in Tripoli, I asked the Italian Agent and Consul-General, who is said to be very well served by his agents in the south of the Regency, whether he knew anything of the matter. He had, he said, no news on the subject, to which he seemed to attach some importance, as he said that it was in this way that the French began from Algeria their intrigues here which had resulted in the present situation.

I cannot myself forget the various remarks made by the French Resident during his journey on the southern border in the spring, on which I accompanied him, with the object of acquiring information as to those regions, and French movements and designs in that direction. These remarks were of a very candid nature, and pointed to M. Millet's

intention of allowing no ordinary obstacle to interfere with the French advance to the South. On one occasion, as I had the honour of reporting, he said in my hearing to a frontier officer who was complaining of having been held in check by M. Millet's predecessor, "Le plus loin que vous poussez, le plus je vous couvrirai." Ghadames is, of course, a most important point both strategically and commercially, for this progress, and, one evening after dinner, M. Millet told me frankly that they did not intend to allow Turkish possession to interfere with any intentions they may have in that direction.

M. Macchiavelli further told me that he would immediately telegraph to his agent at Gabes to inquire whether he knew anything of the matter, and I have now the honour to inclose a copy of a private letter which I have just received from him. This letter would seem to confirm to a certain extent at all events, from a different direction, Mr. Leonardi's report from Sfax.

As it would seem that such an arrangement could not under present circumstances be carried out without the consent or connivance of the Turkish authorities, it might be possible, should it be thought worth while, to learn something more about the matter from other quarters.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

Inclosure 1 in No. 65.

Vice-Consul Leonardi to Consul-General Haggard.

(Private.)
Sir,

Sfax, September 7, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to inform you that a strange rumour reaches me from Gabes, and I give it under all reserve, as to its having any foundation or not. It is to the effect that the South Tunisian telegraph line to Fam-Tatahouine is to be prolonged to Ghadames. One of the Tunis telegraphic service who has had to do with making more substantial the line south of Gabes, would be, it is said, the man who after the extension would remain in charge at Ghadames.

I am sorry that I cannot verify this matter, nor know what arrangement is proposed with the Turks.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. LEONARDI.

Inclosure 2 in No. 65.

Signor Macchiavelli to Consul-General Haggard.

Mon cher Collègue, *Consulat-Général d'Italie, Tunis, le 12 Septembre, 1895.*

MON Agent Consulaire à Gabes a eu vent, dit-il, du projet dont vous m'avez parlé, par suite d'indiscrétions d'une personne ayant des attaches avec l'Administration; mais si le projet existe, comme M. Lombroso semble croire, on le tient secret, et il n'y a pas par conséquent moyen d'obtenir de plus amples informations.

Voilà tout ce que j'ai pu apprendre, et ce n'est pas beaucoup; inutile d'ajouter que si je parviens à obtenir d'autres nouvelles, plus précises, je m'empresse de vous les communiquer.

Veillez, &c.
(Signé) G. B. MACCHIAVELLI.

No. 66.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received October 15.)

(No. 74. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, September 30, 1895.

THE Italian Agent and Consul-General informed me yesterday that he had at length acknowledged the receipt of the note from the French Délégué of the 17th August, denouncing the Italo-Tunisian Treaty.

Your Lordship may recollect that the immediate acknowledgment of the receipt was requested, as reported in my despatch No. 70 of the 13th September.

In his reply, M. Machiavelli told me that he said that in view of that denunciation Italy would fall back on the three previous Treaties between Tunis and Sardinia, Tuscany, and the two Sicilies respectively, which were confirmed by a clause in the Treaty denounced.

He also stated that Italy would further base her position on the Capitulations and on the "Pacte Fondamentale," and moreover called the attention of the Beylical Government to the fact that the Italian Government had only suspended the Consular jurisdiction.

In his rejoinder, M. Machiavelli said the French Délégué had confined himself to stating that the Beylical Government made "toute réserve utile" to his statements and arguments.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 67.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received October 26.)

(No. 74. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, October 7, 1895.

ON the receipt of your Lordship's despatch No. 5, Confidential, of the 30th July, instructing me to gain whatever information I could with reference to the rock said to exist in the Bizerta Canal, as also on any other point of interest connected with that work, I instituted such inquiries as I could on the subject.

I had an opportunity of speaking on the matter with the agent of the Port Company, who informed me that the statement which I had reported to your Lordship was correct, and that the rock had been removed, and this was confirmed in other quarters; but wishing to test the accuracy of this information, and partly through the unsafeness of the post and telegraph in this country, none on the subject being forthcoming from the gentleman acting as British Consular Agent at Bizerta in the absence of the Honourable Terence Bourke, finding, in fact, that I could get no information here that I really could rely on as accurate, I requested Mr. Profeit, the British Vice-Consul, to proceed to Bizerta to find out what he could, as I did not want to excite remark or suspicion by returning there so soon myself.

As the result of this visit I think that the destruction of the rock may be considered as pretty certain. The reasons for this opinion, and other information which he succeeded in acquiring, is embodied in the inclosed Memorandum, and the point where the rock existed is, as directed, marked on the plan, returned herewith, contained in your Lordship's above-mentioned despatch.

Mr. Profeit's interesting and intelligent Report bears out in some respects, and amplifies in others, my own observations reported to your Lordship in my despatch No. 29 of the 9th May, giving an account of my visit to Bizerta. His observations on the strength of the current are specially valuable, and confirm all the information I have received on that subject, including that of the French Resident-General, which I reported in my above-mentioned despatch. Your Lordship will observe that the opinion at least exists now that the plan which M. Millet told me was proposed to be adopted of lengthening the northern pier with this object, may, as I ventured to suggest in my despatch as possible, not be sufficient to stop the current. Mr. Profeit says that that now suggested is to construct a semicircular breakwater across the mouth of the entrance between the two moles, which is to be reduced by nearly one-third in width. If this is adopted, it will render the entry and exit of ships of war of still greater difficulty than would have been caused by the lengthening of one of the moles; in fact, it would seem that it will probably make it impossible to perform such an operation speedily, and this will of course greatly militate against the effective use of the harbour as a naval port, at least in time of war.

If Mr. Profeit's information as to the commercial aspect of the port prove correct, and, amongst other circumstances, the fact that the trade of Bizerta has decreased rather than increased since the opening of the port would argue that it may be so, while there is nothing to indicate a likelihood of any future activity, the success of Bizerta as a commercial port is, as I have had the honour of showing in previous despatches, very problematical. It would now, moreover, seem likely that its value even as a naval port

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and arsenal is only to be secured by a further enormous expenditure in addition to the outlay on the very extensive and expensive works already made. This money will otherwise have been wasted, and, if that further outlay be met, two problems will still remain unsolved: (1) whether the new works will be efficacious in destroying the current; (2) if they are, whether Bizerta will have justified the enormous expense necessary to make it of any use at all, save, perhaps, as a torpedo-boat station. It may therefore well happen that the ultimate result of the violation by France of her engagement may be that Bizerta may turn out to be a source of weakness rather than of the aggressive strength so confidently, if prematurely, claimed for it.

The article which I have the honour to inclose is more moderate than the views which I see constantly expressed.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

Inclosure 1 in No. 67.

Vice-Consul Profeit to Consul-General Haggard.

Sir,

Tunis [undated].

I HAVE the honour to inform you that, in accordance with your instructions, I visited Bizerta, and beg to submit herewith such information about the canal and other points of interest as I was able to obtain.

I ascertained that the rock, which prevented the French fleet from entering the Lake of Bizerta through the canal, had only 5 metres of water over it, and reduced its width navigable for large vessels to 37 metres—the total bottom width of the canal being 64 metres.

On examination of the spot indicated to me as being the place where blasting operations had been most recently carried on, and as the position of the rock, I found that it had lain in close proximity to the small inlet, marked C in the plan annexed,* which is used for repairing the boats and dredgers of the Port Company; measured along the right bank of the canal from the extremity G of the small guide pier, the rocky stratum commences at a distance of about 550 metres, and is said at one time to have extended for about 100 metres in breadth along the right-hand bank from the point C, gradually diminishing in width as it approached in an oblique direction towards the left bank. The greater part of this rock had, indeed, been removed at the time of the visit of the French fleet, leaving only a small section near the point F, sufficient, however, to reduce the passage to the dimensions specified, viz., 37 metres.

On the departure of the fleet, strenuous endeavours were made to remove the impediment and reduce the main waterway to the required depth of 9½ metres, and it is now asserted that this has been effected, and that the canal is 9½ metres deep along its entire centre for a breadth of about 64 metres.

In proof of the probability of this assertion being true, it may be remarked that all operations have now ceased; that the workmen, beyond those indispensable for the care and maintenance of the machinery, have been dismissed, and further, that the Port Company have advertised for sale the main part of the machinery used in the construction of the port and canal, a step which would seem to show that, as far as the Company is concerned, the work is completed. The only work, indeed, which is now being carried out is the completion of the lighthouse on the extremity of the eastern jetty, that on the northern being finished, though not yet in actual use.

With reference to the current which exists in the canal, I noticed, while standing on the extremity of the guiding pier, marked G, that it swept round into the canal with very considerable force, having, as it appeared, traversed a semicircular course.

On proceeding up the canal to the point where the ferry-boat crosses, I found, by comparison with a piece of wood floating past, that at this spot the current ran at least twice as fast as I could walk, i.e., at about 8 miles an hour, and I was, moreover, informed that it was comparatively slight on this particular day.

I further learnt that in the months of December, January, and February the counter-current from the Lake of Bizerta is so strong that it entirely overpowers the sea current, and has on more than one occasion carried out to sea the steam ferry-boat, breaking the steel hawser by which it is kept in position. This current is due to the great rise which takes place in the lake during the rainy season, and especially to the

* Not printed

volume of water which is carried into it by the Tinja from the Lake Ishkel, which is the reservoir for an important watershed of Northern Tunis. So great is then the extra volume of water in the lake that it occasionally causes a rise of nearly 2½ feet in the canal.

As a means of preventing, or at least nullifying to a great extent, the evils of the sea current, it was rumoured that the northern jetty was to be at once extended, but apparently nothing has yet been done towards the realization of this scheme. The general opinion, indeed, appears to be that this would not be sufficient, but that it will be necessary, in order to effectually cope with this current, to construct a semicircular breakwater in front of the entrance, and at the same time to reduce the breadth of the inlet from 420 metres to about 300 metres.

It is, however, recognized that this would be a work of great difficulty owing to the depth, which is more than 20 metres, entailing, moreover, an enormous outlay, and it would appear that the Port Company do not intend to charge themselves with the execution of works which are considered to be necessary in order to render the entrance safe in all weathers. The belief, too, is gaining ground in Bizerta that a mistake has been made in calculating the dimensions of the canal, and that it ought to have been at least twice its present breadth, specially in view of the existence of the current, which had not been sufficiently taken account of.

As to the ultimate destiny of Bizerta, it is at present rumoured that active negotiations are being carried on between the Bizerta Port Company and the Tunisian Government—behind which is France—for the sale of the harbour works. The reasons adduced for this step are:—

1. That the probability of Bizerta becoming an important commercial harbour is remote.

2. That in order to make the harbour as perfect as possible, it will be necessary to expend enormous sums, such as would be more fitly supported by a Government than a Company.

3. That the idea of a commercial harbour is exploded, and that the time has now come for showing the real object of Bizerta, viz., a naval port of the first order.

It may be worth noting that the Deputy Merlon, who is here to report on Tunis, said, in answer to a deputation, that the only chance of success commercially for Bizerta would be to make the port dues lower than those of any harbour in the Mediterranean, and endeavour to sell coal to steamers at rates below Algiers and Malta.

No further developments have, as far as I could learn, been made in the fortifications adopted for the defence of Bizerta. The fortress of Dar-el-Condia is manned with four large cannon and four small quick-firing guns, while on the old Fort d'Espagne, just below and connected with the former, four quick-firing guns are mounted. The Fort of Romadia (Ben Negro), though mounting the same number of guns as Dar-el-Condia, is still in a very unfinished condition, and will require several months to complete unless proceeded with with greater energy and activity than at present.

The idea of erecting two further fortresses on Cape Blanc and Cape Zebid is, I understand, still adhered to.

The construction of the "parc d'artillerie," for which a strip of land on the right-hand side of the Bay of Sebra, on the shore of the inlet in which the small floating dock for the repair of torpedo-boats is placed, was lately expropriated, and declared a military zone, has up to the present not been undertaken, but building operations on several private houses—two more than half built—have been stopped by the military authorities, a source of much discontent in Bizerta, for the town is now so hemmed in by military zones that a great development is scarcely possible, and apparently not desired by the military authorities.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. A. PROFEIT.

Inclosure 2 in No. 67.

Extract from the "Dépêche Tunisienne" of October 1, 1895.

LE 4 Juin dernier, l'Escadre de la Méditerranée, commandée par l'Amiral de la Jaille, arrivait devant Bizerte. Tandis que les gros navires, cuirassés et grands croiseurs, prenaient leur mouillage à un mille environ de la côte, les avisos-torpilleurs "Léger" et "Lévrier" pénétraient dans le canal et venaient se ranger dans la Baie de

Sebra, à l'entrée du lac intérieur, aux côtés de "l'Hirondelle," qui se trouvait depuis quelques jours dans cette baie. Le lendemain, guidés par les pilotes de la Compagnie du Port, le "Suchet," croiseur de 2^e classe de 4,000 tonnes environ, ayant à son bord le Vice-Amiral Commandant-en-chef, et le "Wattignies," croiseur-torpilleur de 1,800 tonnes, entraient à leur tour dans le canal et allaient jeter leur ancre au fond du goulet.

Dans l'après-midi, l'Amiral de la Jaille recevait à son bord le Consul de France, les députations du Conseil Municipal, les représentants de la Compagnie du Port. Il leur exprimait hautement sa satisfaction de voir arriver à bonne fin, et en un si court délai, des travaux qui font de Bizerte un port si précieux pour la France; puis il ajoutait:—

"Jusqu'ici, retenue par de vains prétextes, la flotte Française avait évité de jeter l'ancre dans votre port. Mais le charme est maintenant rompu, car, dédaignant certaines susceptibilités ménagées jusqu'ici, la marine Française vient de prendre définitivement possession de Bizerte. Comme le croiseur "Suchet," les cuirassés de mon escadre auraient pu entrer dans le canal et le lac, n'eût été ce banc de rocher qui reste à enlever sur une cinquantaine de mètres et qui rétrécit à 37 mètres le chenal navigable. Mais ce n'est que partie remise, puisque ce travail n'est plus qu'une question de semaines. A sa prochaine tournée, l'Escadre de la Méditerranée, commandée alors par l'Amiral Gervais, ne manquera certainement pas de venir y jeter l'ancre et de séjourner dans le lac."

Quelles sont ces "susceptibilités ménagées jusqu'ici" dont parlait l'Amiral de la Jaille? Chacun les connaît, ou du moins les devine. Ce sont celles de l'Angleterre, qui ne peut se faire à l'idée que la Méditerranée ne soit pas un lac Anglais: ce sont celles de la Rome d'aujourd'hui, qui nourrit à l'égard de l'héritière de Carthage des sentiments d'une jalousie sans bornes.

Mais, si le Commandant-en-chef de notre escadre l'a bien fait de signaler avec quelque dédain les jalousies qui entourent notre établissement en Tunisie, l'allocation de cet Amiral vaut d'être citée pour d'autres raisons. Elle prouve, en effet, que l'importance militaire de Bizerte est considérable et que sa valeur stratégique mérite toute l'attention de nos gouvernants.

Il suffit de jeter les yeux sur une carte de la Méditerranée pour voir que Bizerte est à cheval sur les deux bassins de cette mer intérieure. On y a vu à la fois sur le bassin occidental, qui baigne les côtes de l'Espagne jusqu'à Gibraltar, et sur le bassin oriental, où se mirent la Tripolitaine, l'Égypte et la Grèce. On y est à une journée de marche de Naples, de la Sicile, et de Malte. On y fait vis-à-vis à la Sardaigne.

On y domine, en quelque sorte, tout le lac Méditerranéen et, pendant une guerre, les navires ayant Bizerte comme base d'opérations seront dans les meilleures conditions pour fondre, à point nommé, sur l'ennemi signalé. C'est une situation au moins égale à celle de Malte et un Anglais, l'Amiral Spratt, écrivait que Bizerte pouvait annuler l'importance militaire de la petite île Anglaise. Le jour où nous aurions la ligne Toulon, Porto-Vecchio, Bizerte, solidement appuyée sur des forces navales imposantes, nous serions très forts et nous pourrions tenir tête sans infériorité aux Italiens, qui disposent de la Spezzia, de la Maddalena et de la Sicile.

L'avantage qu'a le nouveau port Tunisien de commander le passage entre les deux bassins de la Méditerranée est, pour nous, d'une importance toute spéciale. Si nous voulons recevoir le concours de l'Escadre Russe de la Mer Noire, il faut que la libre circulation dans ce passage soit assurée à notre flotte et à celle de nos alliés, et elle ne peut l'être que par Bizerte. C'est ce que fait remarquer avec infiniment de raison notre confrère la "Dépêche Tunisienne": "L'Escadre Russe," dit-il, "nous arrivera par le bassin oriental. Il importe donc de conserver la communication toujours ouverte entre les deux bassins. Le détroit de Messine étant trop facilement défendable, il n'y a de passage possible pour nous qu'entre la Sicile et le Cap Blanc, mais à condition que nous tenions Bizerte."

Tenir Bizerte, c'est-à-dire en faire une base d'opérations pour notre flotte, est donc une nécessité qui s'impose pour nous. Et il n'est pas douteux que nous en retirions le meilleur profit en cas de guerre.

S'il était besoin de fournir une autre preuve de la grande importance stratégique de Bizerte, nous la trouverions dans la mauvaise humeur qui a éclaté chez nos voisins d'au delà des Alpes, quand ils ont connu l'entrée de nos croiseurs d'escadre dans le nouveau canal et l'allocation du Vice-Amiral de la Jaille.

Leurs journaux ont fulminé contre ce qu'ils ont appelé la brusque transformation

de Bizerte en port militaire. L'un d'eux, "l'Unione," a dénoncé cet événement comme une menace, mais, ajoute-t-il, il reste à savoir de quel œil Rome et Londres envisageront le procédé, et si elles permettront que "l'équilibre de la Méditerranée" soit ainsi compromis.

La feuille Italienne s'en est prise au Bey de Tunis, qui n'en peut mais, et lui a demandé gravement de quel droit n'ayant ni armée propre, ni marine, n'étant au surplus l'objet d'aucune menace de la part de l'Italie, il avait permis l'établissement sur son territoire d'une organisation offensive dirigée contre les Puissances Méditerranéennes. La harangue se terminait par une adjuration au Gouvernement Italien de tenir la main à l'exécution des promesses faites. . . . Bref, il est plus que manifeste que si Bizerte devient un centre maritime sérieux, nos voisins en seront fort contrariés, preuve non moins évidente qu'en créant ce centre nous agissons au mieux de nos intérêts.

Les articles des journaux Italiens qui signalaient les dangers de notre attitude en Tunisie n'ont pas eu un grand écho au dehors. C'est en vain que "l'Unione" s'est adressée aux Puissances étrangères. Ces Puissances n'ont pas bougé. Elles se sont sans doute habituées, depuis 1881, à l'idée du Protectorat que nous exerçons sur la Régence, Protectorat qu'elles ont reconnu. Or, un Protectorat entraîne l'accomplissement de mesures fiscales et militaires. Nous avons, en plaçant la Tunisie sous notre tutelle, assumé le soin de la défendre. La création à Bizerte d'un centre maritime est une mesure de défense que nous avons le droit et même le devoir de prendre, sans que personne y puisse trouver à redire.

Si, guidés par une saine appréciation des conditions de la guerre navale qui nous menace, nos gouvernants se décidaient même à faire à Bizerte plus et mieux qu'un simple point de stationnement de torpilleurs, s'ils voulaient y constituer une base d'opérations secondaire et tout ce qu'elle comporte—bassins de radoub, magasins de ravitaillement, ateliers de réparations sommaires, ouvrages et lignes de défense—personne encore ne pourrait y trouver à redire. N'est-ce pas, en effet, la Tunisie qui serait la plus exposée au jour de la guerre? N'est-ce pas sur elle que se porterait l'effort principal des flottes coalisées Austro-Italiennes, puisqu'elle est plus rapprochée des centres d'armement de ces flottes?

A ne considérer les choses qu'au point de vue naval, c'est même à Bizerte qu'il serait logique d'établir le siège de ce sixième arrondissement maritime dont il est question depuis peu, et qui doit englober les côtes d'Algérie et de Tunisie, de Nemours à Zarzis.

Un port admirable et d'un accès toujours facile, une position géographique exceptionnelle, des facilités sans nombre pour la construction des édifices nécessaires sont des avantages incontestables et que, seule, Bizerte peut offrir sur ces côtes longues de 1,984 kilom.

Malheureusement les règles du droit international s'opposent à cette mesure et il faut les respecter. Protectorat n'est pas annexion.

No. 68.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received November 12.)

(No. 77.)

My Lord,

Tunis, October 20, 1895.

FROM information which I have received from a French officer, it would appear likely that the arrangement made last year of turning the brigade occupying the Regency into a division may be again done away with.

In my despatch No. 10 of the 15th March, I had the honour of explaining to your Lordship that the chief cause for this alteration was said to be the friendship of the French Minister for War, General Mercier, for General Leclerc, the Officer Commanding the Troops here, and his wish to prevent that officer from being put "en retraite," which, as he had reached the limit of age for a Brigadier-General, must have happened if he had not been promoted.

But, according to my informant, when this appointment was made, it was forgotten that it entailed all sorts of other changes. For instance, the presence of a General of Division entails that of a Brigadier-General under him, who, with his staff, has to be paid, while the salaries of the officers on the staff of a General of Division are larger than those of members of the staff of a Brigadier-General. The scale, in fact, of pay and position, as well as the number of staff posts, has to be increased all round, and, now that it

is realized that a very large extra expenditure will be the result of what was hoped would be a quiet little job, my informant says that it is thought that the Ministry of War may be afraid of an inquiry of the "Chambre," and (General Leclerc having been transferred to another post) may restore the Tunis detachment of troops to its former position as a brigade.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 69.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received November 12.)

(No. 78.)

My Lord,

Tunis, October 21, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to inclose an extract from the French "Journal des Chambres de Commerce," published in the "Dépêche Tunisienne," on the subject of an alleged letter from your Lordship to the Manchester Chamber of Commerce with reference to the Anglo-Tunisien Treaty, which is said to have been published in the newspapers.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

Inclosure in No. 69.

Extract from "La Dépêche Tunisienne" of October 21, 1895.

ON lit dans le dernier numéro du "Journal des Chambres de Commerce":—

"MANCHESTER.—LA DÉNONCIATION DU TRAITÉ ITALO-TUNISIEN.—En prévision de l'échéance prochaine du Traité Italo-Tunisien le Secrétaire de la Chambre de Commerce de Manchester a écrit au Ministre des Affaires Étrangères, le Marquis de Salisbury, pour lui demander si le Traité Anglo-Tunisien de 1875 n'accordait pas aux produits Britanniques le même traitement qu'aux produits Français en Tunisie, et si, dans l'éventualité d'une réduction de droits sur les importations Françaises, cette réduction ne serait pas appliquée également aux importations Anglaises dans ce pays.

"S'il faut s'en référer à une information reproduite par la presse Parisienne, le Chef du Foreign Office aurait répondu 'qu'aux termes de l'Article VII du Traité Anglo-Tunisien les droits d'entrée sur les produits Anglais ne doivent pas excéder 8 pour cent *ad valorem*, et que, d'ailleurs, les produits Anglais, bénéficiant de la clause de la nation la plus favorisée, obtiendraient le même traitement que les produits similaires Français, voire même la franchise absolue, si, comme on l'annonce, la France est sur le point de réaliser l'Union Douanière avec la Tunisie.'

"Nous ne pouvons croire à l'exactitude de cette nouvelle, qui serait une interprétation erronée des principes de droit international public qui régissent notre Protectorat Tunisien.

"'La France, en effet,' dit la 'Poste,' 'de par le Traité de Kassar-Saïd n'occupe pas seulement dans la Régence, tant au point de vue économique qu'au point de vue politique, une situation de faveur, elle y possède une situation de droit, à laquelle nulle autre ne saurait être comparée. Nous ne sommes pas à Tunis la nation la plus favorisée, nous sommes l'État Protecteur.'

"Nous avons assumé toutes les charges de ce titre, et comment n'en aurions-nous pas les privilèges? La France a garanti la dette Tunisienne, notre Protectorat a été reconnu par toutes les Grandes Puissances, et, si l'Italie seule conteste aujourd'hui le fait, la Grande-Bretagne ne saurait, elle, renier sa propre signature.

"Nous rappelions récemment les dépêches diplomatiques de Lord Salisbury qui lèvent tous les doutes à cet égard.

"Reconnaissant le fait, comment le noble Marquis pourrait-il discuter le droit? Il lui faudrait avoir oublié, dans son désir de rassurer les négociants de Manchester, toutes les conséquences naturelles, fatales qu'entraîne tout Protectorat, et notamment un Protectorat aussi étroit, aussi complet que celui qui nous relie à la Régence. Cela est impossible à admettre.

"Le Marquis de Salisbury n'est pas de l'école de ces diplomates de l'autre siècle, auxquels Georges III reprochait amèrement d'ignorer le droit international et de n'avoir pas lu Vattel. Le 'Premier' Britannique a lu Vattel et n'ignore rien du droit public.

"Et, d'autre part, il est trop avisé pour soulever de nouveaux litiges entre la France et la Grande-Bretagne, à l'heure où la diplomatie de ces deux pays s'applique, non sans peine, à régler les anciens.

"Les Puissances Européennes seraient d'ailleurs mal inspirées en élevant systématiquement des obstacles pour empêcher la France de recueillir le fruit de ses efforts, le juste prix de ses sacrifices, et d'exercer en paix, conformément aux Traités, les prérogatives légitimes de son titre dans la Régence. Le Gouvernement de la République qui a voulu jusqu'ici ménager toutes les susceptibilités, même les moins naturelles, serait obligé de ne plus prendre conseil que de ses intérêts et de ses droits, et rechercherait, afin de mettre un terme à toutes les chicanes et à toutes les controverses internationales, la formule la plus propre à combler les prétendues lacunes de l'organisation politique actuelle."

Annex.

Foreign Office to Manchester Chamber of Commerce.

Sir,

Foreign Office, September 16, 1895.

IN reply to your letter of the 7th instant, I am directed by the Marquess of Salisbury to transmit to you a copy of the Commercial Treaty between Great Britain and Tunis.* It will be observed that, under Article VII, the import duties on British produce are not to exceed 8 per cent. *ad valorem*, and that British produce is moreover entitled to most-favoured-nation treatment in regard to import duties, and, therefore, to the duties levied on French produce.

I am, &c.
(Signed) H. PERCY ANDERSON.

No. 70.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received November 12.)

(No. 80. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, October 26, 1895.

HAVING no report from the Consular Agent at Bizerta, I have to content myself with sending your Lordship a copy and translation of a note from the "Unione," the Italian organ here, giving an account of the injury done to the new harbour there by a gale on the 19th instant. I have written for an official report of this occurrence, and requested Mr. Spezzichino to furnish me with a detailed account of the disaster. This I will inclose if it arrives before this despatch leaves.

This account would seem to show that the current is not the only formidable enemy which the port has to contend with, for, according to the "Unione," the wind was sufficient to overturn the lighthouse, and to carry away nearly the whole length of one of the moles lately completed. Presumably this was only the part above the sea; but in any case, if the "Unione" be correct, it is a very serious injury which it will cost a great deal of money to repair, and probably, unless the structure is very much strengthened, it may happen again at any moment.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

October 28.

P.S.—I inclose a copy and translation of Mr. Spezzichino's Report, which has just arrived. Your Lordship will observe that, without giving me the details, it differs considerably from the report in the "Unione." Without further information, which I will endeavour to procure from some other source, it is impossible to say which of these reports is the most nearly correct. Possibly it will be safest to take both *cum grano salis*, as the correspondent of the "Unione" may be influenced by his wish to depreciate as much as possible a French work, while Mr. Spezzichino may be influenced to a certain extent in the opposite sense, and may at the same time wish to excuse not having reported the circumstance at all. There is, however, probably something in what he says about the newness of the work affecting its stability.

* "Tunis No. 1 (1876)."

It would, however, seem impossible that the former should have reported so definitely the destruction of the lighthouse if it had not taken place. Mr. Spezzichino is, moreover, not accurate in alleging that the "Unione" states that the northern mole was injured. The wind was not from that direction.

W. H. D. H.

Inclosure 1 in No. 70.

Extract from the "Unione."

(Translation.)

A STRONG wind, developing into a hurricane, burst upon Bizerta during the night of the 19th instant. The sea became very rough, and hurled itself towards the shore with such violence that nearly 800 metres of the southern mole were broken and scattered about. Two floating cranes were almost submerged, and fears were expressed as to their being lost. Three months will perhaps be required to repair the damage. The new lighthouse on the extremity of the southern mole was uprooted and borne away by the waves. In this case the wind came from the east-east-south, which explains the reason for all the damage having been done to the new jetty. We may, therefore, well ask ourselves what sort of a harbour this is, where the strength of the wind is so great as to break and disperse a work, such as the mole, composed of huge blocks already consolidated; and we should like to see what vessel, let it be ever so great, would have attempted with such a gale to seek refuge in the port or make for the entrance to the harbour. . . . As to the intrinsic value of the port, it is not necessary to seek far for an answer; it is sufficient to state that we now no longer know how steamers are built or even sailing-vessels; the harbour is large, spacious, and very convenient, but what its precise use will be we do not know. Perhaps it will serve as an anchorage for the "Hirondelle" or some fishing-boat. At least, let us make the most of a bad business.

At the Custom-house, and this I know for certain, 100 fr. have not been taken as dues. Really we have reason to be satisfied! The population is rapidly diminishing; there is a regular stampede. This sorrowful and precarious situation is aggravated by the dark and dismal consciousness that business here only spells ruin. There is no longer the animation and movement that there was, and those who, confiding in a fallacious future, expended what savings they possessed, are now repentant and cast down.

Inclosure 2 in No. 70.

Mr. Spezzichino to Consul-General Haggard.

(Translation.)

Sir,

Bizerta Consular Agency, October 26, 1895.

IN reply to your despatch of the 25th instant, I have the honour to inform you that the damage to the jetty (south) caused by the storm of the 19th is not so important as is reported in the "Unione;" I did not, therefore, think it necessary to report at once a matter of so little consequence.

It is true that the bad weather has done certain damage to the works of the jetty, but, inasmuch as this was completed during the past summer, it was certain that the first storms of the year would do a certain amount of injury to the works, as often happened to the northern jetty. This northern jetty has not suffered the least damage, contrary to the report of the "Unione." I cannot conceal from you, also, that its correspondent is somewhat exaggerated in his articles against the Bizerta Port Company.

The works of the aforementioned southern jetty were not entirely completed, and it is certain that another storm will cause them still further damage, and that, indeed, until the works are absolutely finished, and have had time to consolidate and settle down in their bed at the sea bottom.

I shall not fail in future to report anything of the least importance, as you desire.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. S. SPEZZICHINO.

No. 71.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received November 12.)

(No. 81. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, October 30, 1895.

THE Italian Agent and Consul-General informed me yesterday that on the one or two occasions on which he has seen the Resident-General since his return he has found him so exceptionally amiable, that he is convinced that it is the result of a "mot d'ordre" given him in Paris. Amongst other things, he had expressed his admiration for the work done by some Sicilian labourers in a lately constructed vineyard which he had visited. "I will not disguise from you," he said, "that I should have preferred Frenchmen, but as we cannot get them we shall welcome gladly the laborious and sober Italian workmen."

This is a very different tone from that of a few months back, before M. Millet's journey to Paris, and would seem to argue that, possibly in view of the uncompromising attitude taken up by the Italian Government with reference to the denunciation of their Treaty, the French Government are disposed to be conciliatory preparatory to, and possibly during, the forthcoming negotiations for the conclusion of a new Convention.

M. Macchiavelli told me that this subject had not yet been alluded to between him and M. Millet.

I have, &c.

(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 72.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received November 12.)

(No. 82. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, October 30, 1895.

THE only importance which can be attached to the inclosed cutting from the "Dépêche" is the source from which it comes.

That paper is the organ of the Resident. It may, indeed, in articles of this kind be said to be edited at the Residency.

When, therefore, the "Dépêche" corrects the Senator Lesueur for saying that our Treaty with Tunis is in perpetuity by stating that, "according to international law, every Treaty without final limit is terminable by the denunciation which one or other of the interested parties may choose to make," it may be understood that the Residency are unofficially laying down this new and strange dictum of international law, the sole grounds—and amply sufficient in their eyes—for their asserting as a fact what they know to be a fiction, being that they wish that the positions were reversed.

I have therefore thought it worth while to trouble your Lordship with what might otherwise be considered as merely the editorial rubbish of a second-rate French colonial paper.

It may possibly interest your Lordship more to observe that the last few words of this article support M. Macchiavelli's surmise as to the intended policy of France in denouncing the Italian Treaty, of contriving, if possible, to isolate Italy, and show the vital importance to Italy, to which I have alluded in previous despatches, of our holding by our most-favoured-nation clause.

I have, &c.

(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

Inclosure in No. 72.

Extract from "La Dépêche Tunisienne" of October 28, 1895.

"L'ANGLETERRE et l'Italie en Tunisie."

Sous ce titre, la "Patrie" publie une assez longue interview qu'un de ses rédacteurs aurait eue avec M. Lesueur, Sénateur de Constantine.

A cause de sa longueur et aussi parce qu'elle se borne à reproduire des idées déjà maintes fois émises, nous ne donnerons pas le texte *in extenso* de cette conversation.

Nous en extrayons seulement que l'Italie est mal venue à prétendre aujourd'hui qu'elle n'a jamais reconnu le Protectorat Français sur la Régence, puisqu'en réalité,

elle l'a reconnu maintes fois par l'acceptation théorique et pratique—même volontaire—de toute une série de mesures qui dépendent exclusivement de l'exercice de ce Protectorat.

Nous voulons relever encore ce que M. Lesueur aurait dit du Traité Anglo-Tunisien. Celui-là, fait-on dire au Sénateur de Constantine, contient aussi en faveur de l'Angleterre la clause de la nation la plus favorisée. Et il est d'autant plus dangereux que, si le Traité Italien doit prendre fin à date fixe, en 1896, le Traité Anglais, lui, conçu avec cette habileté spéciale dont les diplomates de la Grande-Bretagne ont donné tant de preuves, règle les relations de l'Angleterre et de la Tunisie sans limite de durée et engage la Tunisie à perpétuité.

C'est une erreur. En droit international, tout Traité, sans durée déterminée, prend fin par la dénonciation que prend soin d'en faire l'une ou l'autre des parties intéressées.

M. Lesueur nous paraît plus dans le vrai quand il ajoute, pour clore son entretien avec le rédacteur de la "Patrie." Mais les gouvernants Anglais sont gens très pratiques en affaires; il se pourrait donc qu'ils acceptassent une transaction sur le traitement de la nation la plus favorisée. Dans ce cas, le Gouvernement Italien, restant isolé, serait bien obligé d'en venir également à composition.

No. 73.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received November 12.)

(No. 83. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, October 30, 1895.

THE return of the Resident-General announced to your Lordship in my despatch No. 76 of the 15th instant has broken the summer calm, and a renewed general activity is noticeable in various directions.

This is reflected in the "Dépêche Tunisienne"—the Resident's organ—and the article from that paper which I have the honour to inclose will show one of these directions in which it is apparent.

One of the statements in this article is new to me—that in 1862 a Treaty was concluded with the Amenokal of the Imouchar at Ghadames, which opened to France the route to the Central Soudan.

It would seem that so far this alleged Treaty must have remained a dead letter, but there is no doubt but that the present French Resident-General here, at all events, wishes to supplement it by some tangible measures.

I have in previous despatches had the honour of showing the forms that these are likely to take, and I now hear that already some small caravans have passed from Ghadames to Gabes.

These caravans are only a beginning, and so far they have been unimportant and unremunerative, the most valuable commercial result and the most significant, as indicating the direction of the trade route, having been, as I hear, a single elephant's tusk, the money for which did not, however, as I learn, go into the pockets of the promoters of the enterprise, since the notorious renegade "General" Allegro—now French Governor of Gabes—made some pretext for carrying it off to Paris, whence neither it nor its price home, as I am told, returned.

So far we hear nothing more of "General" Allegro's scheme of an armed caravan to penetrate into the Soudan by Ghadames—which was to have started this autumn—about which he is said to have journeyed to Paris. Possibly the risk may have been considered too great at present, but it may still be in contemplation. Should I hear anything more about it, I will not fail to report it to your Lordship.

In the meanwhile, two Tuaregs have, during the last few days, arrived here. The first pretext given unofficially by the "Dépêche," for this was the old story that they had come to complain of and claim an indemnity for the aggressions on them of the Tunisian frontier tribes, but this is not considered to be better founded than was the mythical Kroumir invasion which led to the occupation of Tunis.

They are very closely watched and guarded, so, as I have found, it is quite impossible for anybody outside the Residency Agents to have any communication with them, and the fact that they are lodged with the Sheikh-el-Medina—the Spiritual Head of the Church in Tunis—would seem to indicate that considerable importance is attributed to their advent. A great deal of mystery is made about them, and one night—one does not quite see why—they were smuggled by a side door into the Residency instead of going in openly by day. It is said that they are going to Paris. If they do so I will inform your Lordship.

In any case, their presence even here would seem to indicate at least a wish to conciliate for some reason or other those scourges of the desert.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

Inclosure in No. 73.

Extract from "La Dépêche Tunisienne" of October 28, 1895.

LA PÉNÉTRATION DU SAHARA ET L'ANGLETERRE.—Bien avant que la France ne se fût installée dans l'Afrique du Nord, les Anglais, gens pratiques, avaient tout d'abord songé à se créer des points de repère sur la route qui conduisait aux Indes.

C'était alors à la fin du dix-huitième siècle.

Mais un homme avait vu le danger que courrait la France si la Grande-Bretagne prenait pied dans la Méditerranée.

Cet homme était un génie, c'était Bonaparte.

Pendant la campagne d'Italie (1796-97) il avait compris, déjà, que c'était en Égypte qu'il devait porter ses coups.

Mais par les batailles d'Aboukir et de Saint-Jean-d'Acre, l'Angleterre reprend l'avantage et, avec la ténacité qu'apporte cette nation dans ses entreprises coloniales, elle assied sa prépondérance sur la Méditerranée en prenant Malte, dont elle refuse de se dessaisir. (Paix d'Amiens.)

Éclairé sur les avantages que procureraient au commerce Français des relations suivies avec le Soudan, le Général Bonaparte avait écrit, en 1798, au Sultan du Bornou.

Aussi, dès le commencement du dix-neuvième siècle, alors que la France trop appauvrie ne pouvait inaugurer une politique coloniale en Afrique, voyons-nous les efforts des Anglais se porter sur la ligne Tripoli-Bornou (1817).

Mais lorsqu'en 1855, le Dr. Barth revint du Soudan, la prise d'Alger avait eu lieu vingt-cinq ans auparavant et le drapeau tricolore flottait aux confins du désert.

Si Hamza, Chef de la tribu des Ouled Sidi Cheikh, apportait à la France le vasselage du Touat et du Sahara jusqu'au Soudan (1856).

Un an plus tard, la Grande-Bretagne, abandonnant ses visées Tripolitaines, partit de Zanzibar pour découvrir les sources du Nil.

Pour répondre à la prise d'Alger, dont la conquête s'était effectuée malgré ses menaces, voyant que la France s'installait solidement dans l'Afrique du Nord, elle déterminait la Turquie à prendre pied en Tripolitaine, espérant ainsi nous barrer la route de l'Égypte.

Mais l'œuvre Française continuait sans arrêt sa marche vers le sud.

Le Maréchal Randon pose un premier jalon sur la route du Soudan.

Au moment même où l'on plaçait les rails du chemin de fer d'Alger à Blidah, une première caravane, venue de Ghat, arrivait dans l'ancienne capitale des Deys.

L'idée de gagner le Soudan en traversant le Sahara prenait pied dans l'opinion, si bien qu'en 1858, un Commandant Supérieur de cercle pouvait écrire: "... et qui sait si un jour, reliant Alger à Tombouctou, la vapeur ne mettra pas les tropiques à six journées de Paris."

Le Maréchal Randon, Gouverneur de l'Algérie, se proposait alors de créer des relations commerciales avec le pays des nègres.

Une fois le courant des caravanes établi, son projet était de fonder des Agences Consulaires à Ghat, dans l'Aïr, à Tombouctou, au Touat, partout, enfin, où la présence d'un grand marché Africain pouvait nous intéresser.

C'est alors que l'on eut pour la première fois l'idée de la formation de troupes Sahariennes spéciales, chargées d'assurer la sécurité des transactions au désert.

La France vient seulement de mettre ce projet à exécution.

Pendant ce temps, nos vieux établissements du Sénégal prospéraient, la Colonie s'agrandissait et l'on pouvait bientôt prévoir un Empire Africain appartenant à la France et baigné à la fois par l'Atlantique et la Méditerranée.

Enfin, et pour entrer dans la voie d'exécution, un Traité signé en 1862 à Ghadamès avec l'Amenokal des Imouchar, Si-el-Hadj Khenouklen, nous ouvrait la route du Soudan Central.

C'est alors que l'Angleterre, effrayée de l'extension rapide de l'influence Française, sut nous faire accepter son alliance.

La France prit le contre-pied de sa ligne de conduite en Afrique. Elle commit des fautes, des imprudences, et la pénétration du Sahara, que l'on pensait chose presque accompli, fut de nouveau rendue pour longtemps impossible.

Tel un voyageur dans le désert !

S'il poursuit sa route avec assurance, il rencontrera bientôt un puits où il pourra se désaltérer.

Mais si, la bouche en feu, il se laisse, pour apaiser sa soif, prendre à un mirage trompeur qui lui montre au loin des oasis aux palmiers verdoyants, dont les panaches immobiles se reflètent dans des eaux limpides, alors il est perdu et l'immensité lui sert de tombeau dans un linceul de sable.

Or, dans toutes les difficultés Africaines qu'elle a eues, la France a pu constater l'influence d'une main Anglaise.

Au Maroc et dans le Touat notre prépondérance a été combattue et, si les établissements Anglais de la côte Mauresque ne sont pas devenus florissants, ils n'en ont pas moins gravement gêné notre marche en avant.

Lorsque la "Royal Niger Company" fut créée, l'Angleterre se flattait hautement d'arriver au Bornou.

Il fallut en rabattre.

Cependant, quel que soit le but que la Grande-Bretagne semble assigner à ses agissements en Afrique, quelque couleur qu'elle cherche à donner à ses expéditions, le but qu'elle vise apparaît clairement aux yeux de l'Europe.

La fameuse expédition du Soudan Oriental, les voyages de Stanley à la recherche d'Emin Pacha, qui n'était pas perdu, le bombardement d'Alexandrie et cette mainmise sur l'Égypte, qu'était-ce tout cela, si ce n'est l'exécution de la première partie d'un plan démesurément grandiose, la fondation d'un immense Empire Africain s'étendant de l'Égypte au Cap ?

Le rôle important qu'aurait pu jouer la "Royal Niger Company" est terminé.

Ne pouvant s'avancer jusqu'au Tsâd par l'ouest, les Anglais ont voulu y aller par l'est et ils se sont empressés de délimiter par des frontières les possessions voisines, tandis qu'ils s'attribuaient la part du lion.

L'arrangement avec l'État Indépendant du Congo, n'était-ce pas une façon habile de lui assigner des frontières, en dorant la pilule ?

La prise de possession de l'Uganda et la conquête de l'Unyoro, que suivra bien certainement une mainmise sur les provinces Équatoriales, ne sont que des détails dans l'ensemble du projet, mais n'en constituent pas moins des points de repère indiquant clairement la route suivie par l'influence Anglaise.

Bientôt les Mahdistes, qui ont infligé à l'Angleterre un sanglant échec, se trouvant ensermés de toutes parts, seront à leur tour anéantis ou vaincus.

Du côté du Tchad nous voyons un esclave, renommé, il est vrai, pour sa bravoure et son intelligence, apparaître subitement à la tête de bandes armées de fusils à tir rapide et qui, se ruant sur le Bornou, dépose le Sultan qui y régnait et pénètre dans Kouka, le Paris du Soudan Central.

Ne pourrait-on pas voir là une manifestation de la puissance Anglaise, surtout si l'on songe que Rabah n'était autre que le bras droit de Zouber Pacha, l'ami bien connu des Anglais ?

Enfin, plus au sud, secondée par un homme d'une vaste intelligence et d'un mérite sans égal, Cécil Rhodes, l'Angleterre poursuivait sa campagne du Cap de Bonne-Espérance à Zanzibar.

Les petits États qui sont semés le long des côtes de l'Afrique sont sans avenir par eux-mêmes, tandis que les Colonies Allemandes, Italiennes, Portugaises, et Espagnoles ne sauraient grandir.

L'État Indépendant du Congo et qui du reste ne peut plus guère s'augmenter de nouveaux territoires, la France et l'Angleterre, voilà les trois Puissances qui se partageront l'Afrique.

L'Angleterre a fait tout son possible pour que l'œuvre de pénétration ne s'accomplisse pas. Elle se rendait bien compte, en effet, de l'immense avantage que ce fait nous donnerait sur elle.

Aussi, si nous voulons mener à bien l'œuvre de la France en Afrique, finirons-nous par reconnaître que seul, le chemin de fer du Transsaharien Central nous permettra d'arriver les premiers.

Encore faudrait-il qu'il soit construit avant la création de la ligne télégraphique d'Alexandrie au Cap et dont l'établissement sera forcément suivi de la création d'un chemin de fer qui porterait un coup mortel à notre influence.

No. 74.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received November 25.)

(No. 84. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, November 5, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to inclose, as the result of the further inquiry which, as I had the honour of stating in my despatch No. 80 of the 26th ultimo, I intended making with reference to the amount of damages caused to the mole at Bizerta by the late gale, a report which I have just received from what I cannot but consider as a good authority. The actual damage according to this account is, as I ventured to anticipate, less than what was reported by the correspondent of the "Union," and more than that reported by the British Acting Consular Agent, in reply to my request for information on the subject.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

Inclosure in No. 74.

Report received by Consul-General Haggard.

JE m'empresse à vous communiquer la réponse que j'ai reçue de Bizerte au sujet des effets de la dernière bourrasque. La jetée sud a été démolie pour la longueur de 300 mètres, le phare de cette jetée a disparu et deux grues à vapeur qui avaient eu le même sort ont pu être repêchées.

A noter qu'outre le phare enlevé par la mer, il y en a un autre sur la jetée nord et deux plus petits sur deux éperons qui protègent dans l'avant-port l'accès du canal.

Tunis, le 5 Novembre, 1895.

No. 75.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received December 9.)

(No. 88. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, November 18, 1895.

SUBSEQUENT to his letter on the subject of the damage done to the works at Bizerta by the late gale which I had the honour to inclose in my despatch No. 84 of the 5th instant, my informant states that, in order to verify accurately his assertions, he took a boat so as to examine minutely the injuries, and that he found them exactly as he had stated, save that there was also some damage done to the northern pier.

Your Lordship may recollect that the British Acting Consular Agent, in his despatch of which I had the honour of inclosing a copy in my despatch No. 80 of the 26th October last, attributing to the "Union" a statement which that paper had not made as to the northern pier having been injured, denied that it had, and drew therefrom the conclusion that the eastern pier had only suffered owing to the work having only been constructed recently, and not having had time to settle.

If, however, my informant be correct, his statement not only disproves that of Mr. Spezzichino, but demolishes his deduction, as the northern pier has been concluded for a long time, considerably over a year, I believe, and was, moreover, less exposed to the wind than was the eastern, so it would seem possible that the danger to the construction from a gale may be one which may arise on other occasions in the future.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 76.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received December 9.)

(No. 90. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, November 19, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to inclose a copy and translation of a despatch from the Acting Consular Agent at Bizerta, informing me that notices have been put up in that town, signed by the Captain of Artillery, inviting tenders for the construction of an arsenal at a cost not exceeding 123,000 fr. Mr. Spezzichino calls attention to the fact that no place is specified for the construction of the "arsenal." The place which goes by that name now is situated at the extreme end of the lake, many miles away from the sea. It is possible, however, that the place meant may be the ground which was expropriated for the construction of a "parc d'artillerie," as so marked on the map inclosed in my despatch No. 75 of the 7th October, and my Italian colleague informs me that his agent has so reported, and that the sum allotted for the construction amounts to 133,000 fr., not 123,000 fr. as reported by Mr. Spezzichino.

I am requesting Mr. Spezzichino to give me further information.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

Inclosure in No. 76.

Mr. Spezzichino to Consul-General Haggard.

(Translation.)

Sir,

Bizerta Consular Agency, November 12, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to report that notices, signed by the local Captain of Artillery, were to-day posted up on the town walls, inviting tenders—to be adjudicated on the 26th November—for the construction of an arsenal at a cost of about 123,000 fr.

The position of the said arsenal was not, however, indicated, but will be known as soon as the works have been begun.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. S. SPEZZICHINO.

No. 77.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received December 9.)

(No. 91. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, November 31, 1895.

IN my despatch No. 86 of the 14th instant, I have mentioned that, in view of the feeling in his colony, the Italian Agent and Consul-General thought it advisable to call the Resident-General's attention to the bad effects which might be produced by the constant attacks on it of the French press. Since then the "Dépêche," the only paper here over which the Resident has any practical influence, has been much more reticent and moderate in tone.

M. Macchiavelli has told me that in the course of the conversation the Resident expressed surprise that the editor of the Italian paper, the "Unione," had never been to call on him; to which M. Macchiavelli had replied that, frankly, M. Millet could hardly expect that he would do so in view of the attitude and words with reference to the Italian colony hitherto attributed to him, and then went on to say, "You will forgive my saying so, but you have not hitherto been 'trop habile' in your treatment of Italians; 'Pourquoi brusquer tant de questions?'"

M. Macchiavelli told me that M. Millet took this little lecture, which, as he said, six months back would have led to a violent outburst, in very good part, saying that when he first came here he did not understand the situation, which he had taken "en gros;" that now he saw that, failing French, who apparently could not be persuaded to come here, the laborious Italian population must be encouraged and fostered. M. Macchiavelli added that, in the ardour of his new-born enthusiasm, he even spoke in

high terms of the Sicilians who flock here. This certainly shows great indulgence, for the Sicilian colony, though it has doubtless many hard-working men amongst its members, contains also as many cut-throats and gaol-birds as, I fancy, could be found among any population of equal proportions. Many of them are escaped criminals, or men who have served their time, and nearly all the many crimes of violence which weekly take place are committed by Sicilians.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 78.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received December 9.)

(No. 92. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, November 27, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to inclose a copy and translation of a Notice from the "Unione," giving an account of the damage recently done to the new fishery works which extend across the gut of the Lake of Bizerta. This current would appear likely to be one from the lake seawards, possibly caused by the recent rains, but, as usual, I have no information from the Acting Consular Agent; and although I am writing to him for information, can, as your Lordship will have observed, by no means rely on the accuracy of the intelligence which he will consequently give me.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

Inclosure in No. 78.

Extract from the "Unione" of November 24, 1895.

(Translation.)

IN the recent storms, as I have elsewhere had occasion to inform the readers of the "Unione," the violence of the waves produced by a wind—a veritable hurricane—coming from the north-north-east, partially destroyed the southern jetty, dispersing about 300 metres of the wall, carried away a provisional lighthouse placed thereon, damaged even the northern jetty already thoroughly consolidated, and would, had it lasted longer, have swept away the other iron lighthouse, just as it tore from their positions two steam revolving cranes and precipitated them into the sea. Now the irresistible strength of the internal current in the lake, forcing itself among the iron screwed stakes of the barrier, has torn them up, and has carried away—they being completely lost—the steel nets forming the new fishery, which were believed to be indestructible. The loss certainly amounts to more than 50,000 fr.

As is thus seen, this splendid harbour has certain unfortunate disadvantages. Should the sea become rough, the entry is at least hypothetical; and should the affluents to the lake increase in volume, the current becomes so violent as to be a real source of danger.

But for a naval port it appears that this difficulty is not of any great importance. The proof of this is that the works of the arsenal have been begun. A commencement is being made with the "parc d'artillerie," which is of immense size, situated on the shore of the Sebka, that is, of the so-called Commercial Harbour, and which at the same time guards the entrance to the lake. Instead of being an artillery barrack, as might be understood by the name "parc," it is really a completely equipped arsenal—a dépôt for powder, shells, mitrailleuses, projectiles of every kind, repairing workshops, &c.—in fine, everything necessary for the rapid fitting out of a fleet, and for putting an army on a war footing.

No. 79.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received December 9.)

(No. 93. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, November 28, 1895.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 90 of the 19th instant, I have the honour to inform you that, in reply to my inquiry, the Acting Consular Agent at Bizerta reports that the tenders asked towards the construction of the arsenal at Bizerta amount to 122,172 fr., and not to 133,000 fr. as stated by my other informant.

Mr. Spezzichino adds that he has lately learnt that the place where the arsenal is to be constructed is the "parc d'artillerie," thus confirming my other information on this point.

I have, &c.

(Signed)

W. H. D. HAGGARD.

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